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WebDesigner

ISSUE 92

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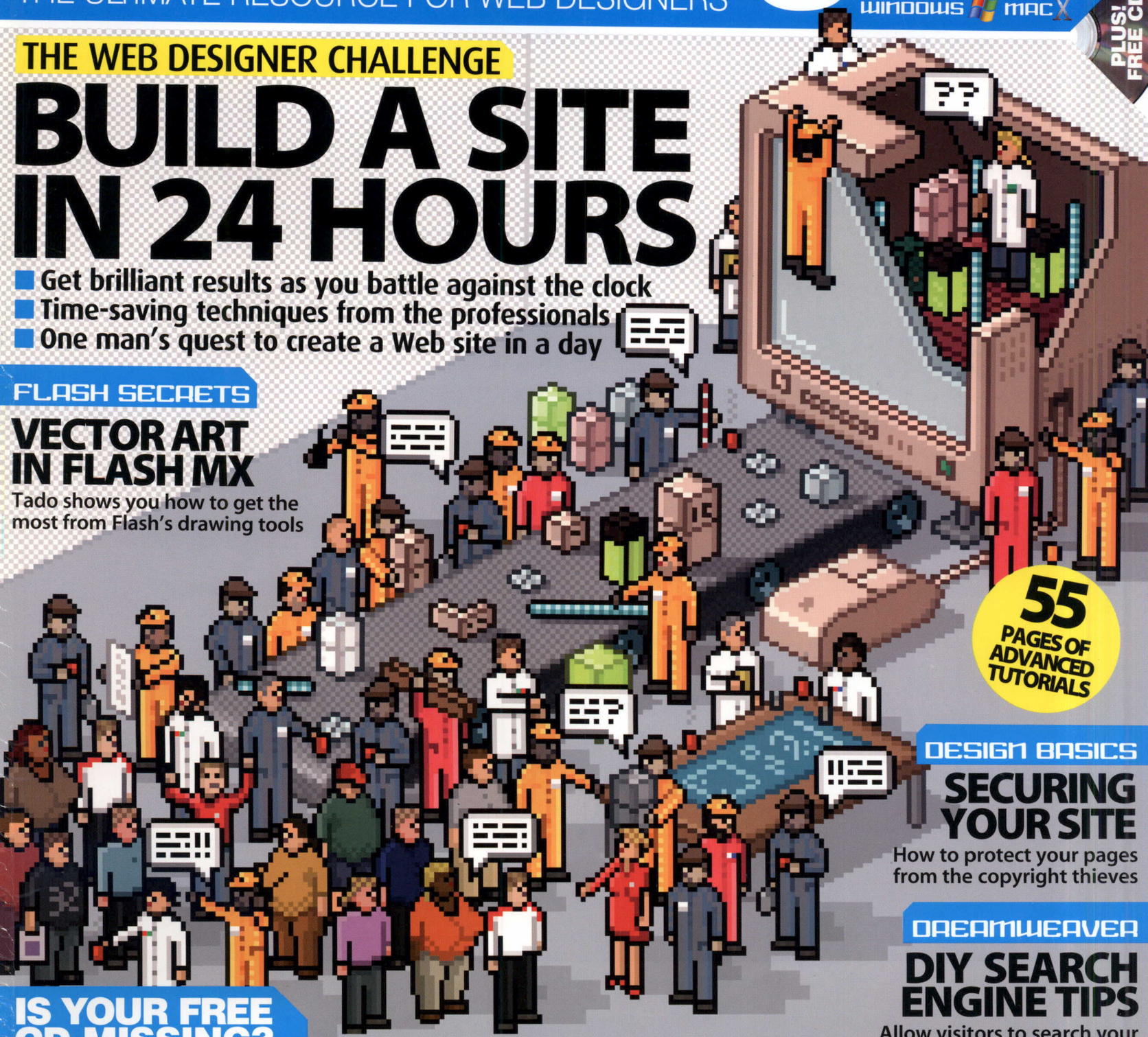

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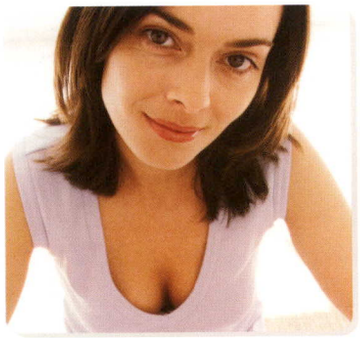

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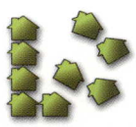

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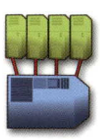

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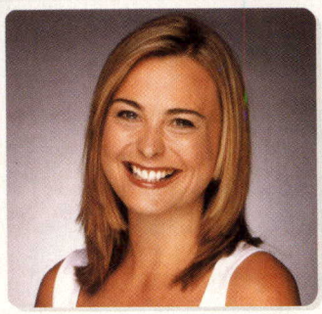

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
Subscription rates (13 issues)
UK £38 Europe £61 World £81

Printed by Southernprint Web Offset,
17-21 Factory Road, Poole, BH16 5SN
Distributed by Seymour Ltd, 1st Floor, 86 Newman Street, London W1P 3LD Tel: 0207 3968000

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Web Designer
ISSN 1741-9131

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WELCOME

FOLLOW THE DREAM

Building Web sites isn't easy. Let's face it, that's why you're reading a magazine like this – if it was a doddle to churn out the next BBCi, we'd all be at home earning our millions. It can be an exceedingly difficult process to build even the smallest of sites, and that's before you even take time constraints into consideration. This is why we've decided to devote our main feature this month to the art of building great Web sites in double-quick time. Forget about cutting corners, and instead get ready to better sites in less time than ever before.

We thought we'd mark this concept with our first ever pixel art cover. Fashioned by the excellent team at Engine Design, we think this is one of our best covers yet, and love the level of detail present in the virtual factory. It's a bit of an artwork special this month, as we've also persuaded cartoon superheroes Tado to join us again – only this time, they're going to show you just how they build up their stunning artwork filled with great characters. Turn to page 68 for one of the most enlightening and fun tutorials you'll ever read.

Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

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WEB DESIGNER: OUR PROMISE TO YOU

Design focus
Web Designer is the only monthly UK magazine devoted solely to helping you improve your site-building skills. Every month, we focus on the key programs that Web designers of all experience and expertise use: Dreamweaver, Photoshop and Flash. Unlike other titles, we don't shy away from developer issues either, with a section dedicated to hand coding.

Expert help
Each issue of *Web Designer* comes packed with detailed tutorials and indispensable tips and tricks. A dedicated helpdesk section features a team of hand-picked experts to answer your Web design queries. What's more, every article in the magazine is written by an expert in the relevant field.

Practical advice
We are committed to bringing you results, so any tutorial you follow will yield impressive returns that you can use on your own site. To make things easier, the cover disc contains files for you to get started on every tutorial within the magazine.

COVER ART: ENGINE

Our main feature this month seemed like the perfect opportunity to delve into pixel art for the first time, so we gave the team at Engine the brief of creating a factory for us, complete with conveyor belt, boiler suit clad workers and a half-built monitor.

YOUR GUIDE TO THIS ISSUE...

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VECTOR ART IN FLASH MX
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GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE
ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP

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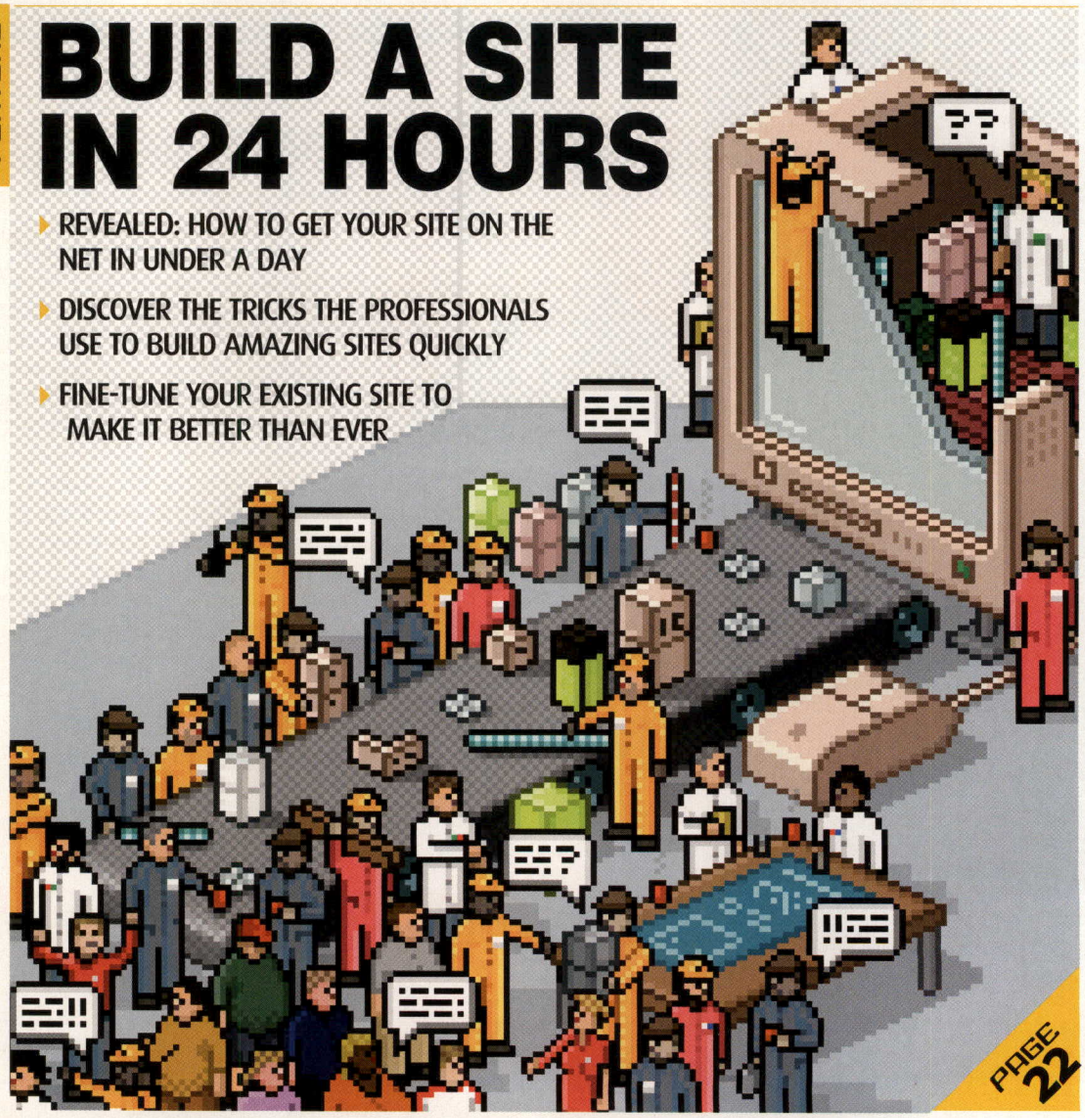
SEE PAGE 140 FOR FULL DETAILS

FEATURE

BUILD A SITE IN 24 HOURS

- REVEALED: HOW TO GET YOUR SITE ON THE NET IN UNDER A DAY
- DISCOVER THE TRICKS THE PROFESSIONALS USE TO BUILD AMAZING SITES QUICKLY
- FINE-TUNE YOUR EXISTING SITE TO MAKE IT BETTER THAN EVER



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FEATURE

PROTECT YOUR SITE

- Keep thieving hands off your images and code
- Foolproof ways to keep your site safe from hackers
- See how to prevent people hotlinking without your permission

PROTECT YOUR SITE
Designing a site isn't always just about putting it together. We look at the threats your pages could face on the Web and examine what you can do to keep them at bay
PROTECT
WHAT'S THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN?

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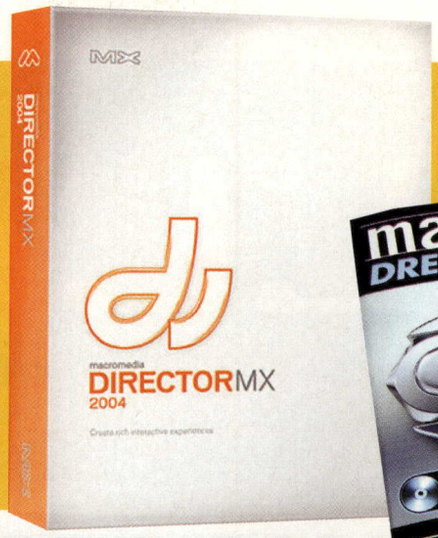

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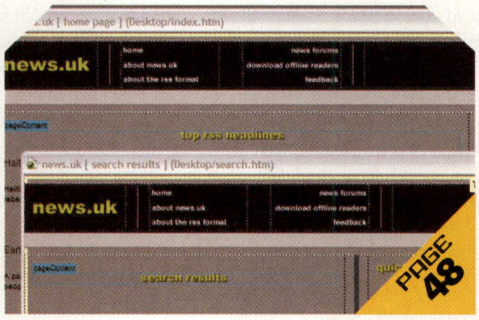

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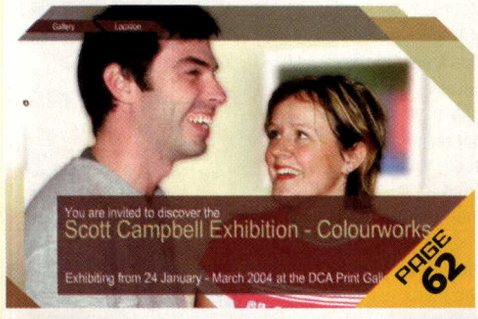
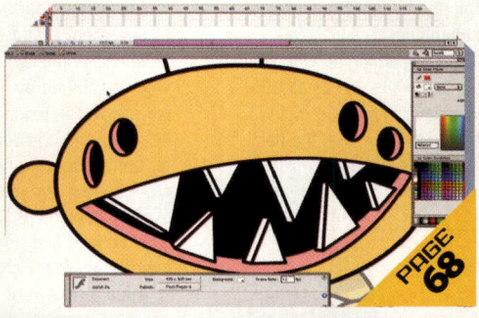


BUILD STUNNING WEB ART IN FLASH



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YOUR ESSENTIAL ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST EVENTS IN THE WORLD OF WEB DESIGN, GRAPHICS CREATION AND SITE DEVELOPMENT

BAFTA INTERACTIVE AWARDS INNOVATIONS

The UK's equivalent to the Oscars rethinks its new media awards in a bid to acknowledge great Web design work

While the film world held its collective breath for its big award ceremonies, this year's BAFTA Interactive Awards arrived with a brand new format.

For the first time since forming in 1997, recognition for the video game industry and the digital media world was split down the middle. As a result, categories were broadened to cover nominations for online learning and entertainment, DVD production, technical innovation and design. "We've taken the decision to separate the awards after extensive consultation with sections of the industry," said BAFTA Interactive Chairperson and Macromedia Vice-president Sue Thexton. "This fundamental change should enable BAFTA to give all areas of new media greater support."

"For the first time, recognition for the video game industry and the digital media world was split down the middle"

Big winners included the Tate Online, which overcame competition from the likes of Channel 4 to scoop the Best Online Factual award for its innovative delivery of factual information on the Web. Nominated also within the Best Interactive Arts category, the Tate in Space initiative by artist Susan Collins was eventually pipped by Emote's highly conceptual Alleph.net.

However, since teaming up with BT in 2001, visitors to the site and its 65,000 artistic images have more than tripled. "We're delighted to have won the Best Online Factual award, as it demonstrates that in the process of fulfilling our aim to make art accessible to all, BT and Tate Online have developed the site to be a powerful arts educational vehicle," said BT's Head of Sponsorship, Paul Leonard.

Other notable prizes went to BBCi, which was nominated in no less than five categories and picked up Best Online Entertainment for its hugely successful Celebdaq site. In the Design stakes it was left to digital agency Randommedia to edge out fellow hopefuls Mook, after its beautifully realised Greenwich Millennium Village project swayed the judges. DVD nods went to the Disney Home Entertainment team after their work on the Lion King Special Edition outshone music discs from Led Zeppelin and Westlife.

Elsewhere, a special Lifetime Achievement award went to one-time BBC radio and TV producer Peter Armstrong, who established the broadcaster's Interactive Television Unit in 1986. In 1994 he set up the Oneworld.net online forum for human rights, which today unites social organisations and media-makers the world over: "I share it with all those with whom I have worked and from whom I've learned over these twenty multimedia years."

A full rundown of all the nominees and eventual winners can be found at **www.bafta.org**, along with links to the relevant submissions. ■

■ The Tate Online romped home with the Best Online Factual award, despite fierce competition

■ The atmospheric Alleph.net site triumphed in the Best Interactive Arts category

■ The prestigious BAFTA award is now a possibility for Web site designers

DID YOU KNOW?

5 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT... BAFTA AWARDS

1. 2004 is the first year that the BAFTA Interactive Entertainment Awards have been divided into games and new media.
2. With the help of BAFTA Vice-president Lord Puttnam, the event is now regarded as the most prestigious in the industry.
3. Committee member Sue Thexton joined Macromedia in 1995, having been General Manager of Adobe Northern Europe.
4. BAFTA held an Interactive Festival leading up to the awards, featuring master classes from the likes of Macromedia.
5. Award winner Peter Armstrong chaired the MultiMedia Corporation when its 3D World Atlas sold over a million copies in 1994.

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NEWS SHOAT

BT BUILDER

BT Business Broadband has launched its own site-creation tool in response to reports suggesting that small UK businesses continue to put money into online pursuits they can ill afford.

BT Website Creator is an all-in-one service that allows Internet Business Pack customers to build and maintain their own domain for as little as £10 per month. "Whether businesses simply need an online business card or a more complex site for taking orders, the BT Website Creator can do this for next to nothing," insisted BT Business Broadband's Director of Value Added Services, Neville Manuel. Further details and conditions can be found at **www.btbroadbandoffice.com/ibp.** ■

SUN MICROSYSTEMS

Sun-thing good

The firm renowned for its powerful graphics servers looks to find fortune in next-generation browsing

Pioneering work at Sun Microsystems could be set to revolutionise the way we design for the Web. According to the engineers there, Microsoft may have ruled the way we conceive the Web's interface for far too long, and the time for a revolution could be just around the corner.

■ Scott McNealy: hoping Sun will shine on Web browsers around the world

At the forefront of this is an incredible prototype for the first 3D Web browser that uses a completely new metaphor for loading, viewing and archiving HTML documents. Developed out of hours by 33-year-old Sun programmer Hideya Kawahara, the 'Looking Glass' technology lets you grab pages with the mouse and stack them like a collection of magazines. A transparency feature then enables the viewer to look through documents and onto those waiting them.

"I didn't just want to follow Windows and do a better job chasing them," admitted Kawahara. "It's not as interesting to follow. We should dream some new worlds."

When Sun officials previewed Kawahara's preliminary efforts they encouraged him to add more features before demonstrating it at last year's Linux World show. Innovative touches like the ability to attach post-it notes to the rear of files and an awesome facility for zooming in on images have excited bosses so much that it could herald an upsurge in fortune for the struggling company. "A lot of innovation at Sun bubbles up from the bottom. You can't make it all happen from the top down," said Sun's Chief Executive, Scott McNealy. "We plan to take Looking Glass and build it into the features of desktop software." ■

ETERNAL EGYPT

Surf like an Egyptian

One of the world's most fascinating countries promotes its attractions with the help of an expensive new site

Ask any consultant what you'd need to set up a good Web site, and they'll probably say it needn't cost all that much. It would almost certainly be in stark contrast to the way the Egyptian tourist board has gone about the development of their new online domain.

'Eternal Egypt' represents an unprecedented project that has spanned a life cycle of three years and a whopping grant from none other than IBM.

'Big Blue' offered up $2.5 million (£1.4 million) to cover the work – dubbed as a 'museum without walls', which the country hopes will play an integral part in energising its tourist trade for years.

"I always visit places because I see a photo or read a book and then am tempted to go to the place," said Eternal Egypt organiser Fathi Saleh. "This venture will be one of the most important Web sites for people's cultural heritage in the world."

The primary aim is to give sightseers and historical enthusiasts a wholly interactive experience that manages to simulate Egypt as it once was. Shockwave technology has been expertly used to provide immersive 3D tours of Tutankhamun's legendary tomb, along with renderings of historical artefacts and a Webcam gallery. The multilingual content also functions as a digital guide to the Egyptian Museum and can be accessed by mobile phones or PDAs.

"Eternal Egypt marries technology and culture," explained Egyptian Minister of Communications, Ahmed Nazif. "We have long realised the importance of information technology in preserving such a great heritage. Egypt owes it to the world to make sure it is preserved."

Eternal Egypt is live now and can be found by visiting **www.eternalegypt.org.** ■

■ The intuitive home page contains links to a staggering array of multimedia content

■ For £1.4 million, you'd expect a nifty Flash intro and language selection somewhere

■ Interactive Shockwave 3D animations lie at the heart of the new Egypt Web site

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Where to find the best Web design help and advice online

B-MAN ART WORKS

www.b-man.dk

With the tag line of 'Personal Playground and Resource Centre', B-Man Art Works is a great place for digital artists to hang out. A news section informs of new sites, and weekly picks from the design and photography world are linked. There are also galleries of images and an array of tutorials.

CSS ZEN GARDEN

www.csszengarden.com

If the CSS Zen Garden is to be believed, there's a reluctance among graphic and Web designers to adopt style sheets. This site aims to promote and encourage the practice by showcasing attractive and professional templates from various authors. Sample code can be grabbed by anyone keen on replicating what they see.

NET INSPIRATION

www.netinspiration.com.ar

It's all very well being fired and inspired by other people's work, but as far as the Web's concerned it can be tough locating the good stuff. Net Inspiration delivers some of the best material straight to your browser, arranged neatly into categories, including experimental and graphic – while news and polls are frequently posted.

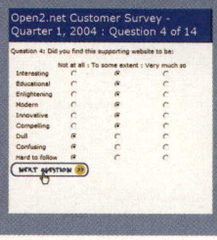
NEWS SHORT

FLASH TV

Macromedia has extended the boundaries of its Flash platform into the realms of interactive TV. A partnership with Samsung Electronics will see the technology embedded within the manufacturer's SMT-7000 range of set top boxes. "By ensuring our customers can experience all their favourite sites and applications with the same richness as their desktop computer, the Flash Player SDK also gives us the control to extend the set top platform user experience using Flash," said Samsung's Senior Marketing Manager, Kim Young-Joon. The move will let developers produce broadcast content like dynamic interfaces, program guides and games from within Flash MX Professional 2004. ■

NEWS SHORT

OPEN OPINIONS



The Open University has launched an online research initiative to gather and study visitor perceptions of its Open2.net site. Partnered by the BBC, it hopes to gain valuable feedback regarding recent modifications and use the info to steer future updates. Users follow a survey based on a 'strategic online research tool' known as Ackura, provided by digital agency KMP associates. "As part of what we do on Open2.net we constantly need to refine our methods to ensure our users get a rewarding interactive online experience," said BBC's Fiona Kerr,"and we need to obtain user feedback." ■

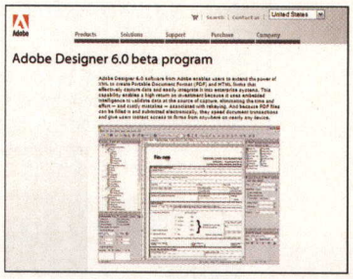
FORM DESIGNER

Adobe's XML factor

Shared document giant spreads its PDF wings into XML authoring with a brand new beta suite

A brand new XML design tool from Adobe has recently been made available as part of a first phase of beta testing.

Interested Web designers are encouraged to take part in trialing the tool, which promises to let users convert existing XML documents into HTML or PDF equivalents in less than five minutes. Specifically targeted at intelligent document creation, the as yet unnamed package will also facilitate the generation of layers within PDF files, which can then contain audio, Flash or interactive components.



■ Adobe's latest beta contains tools for helping you to convert documents to HTML and PDF

Unofficially dubbed the 'XML/PDF Form Designer', the suite boasts a highly intuitive and graphical interface that will promote the visual mapping of imported schemas onto form fields.

"The whole coding step is reduced to a drag-and-drop process, and you can make something in a couple of minutes," revealed a spokesman for Adobe. "We think there are a lot of developers who will love this, whether they're .Net or Java programmers."

Not only can documents be designed in PDF and then processed, but the software will even create an XML Data Package that can be published as an XML interface. Consistency for business applications is ensured by offering random XML formats that support standard schemas, while automatic connection features remove the need for server-side processing.

Adobe had already signaled its commitment to the XML standard by extending capabilities within FrameMaker 7.1, and also in the acquisition of Yellow Dragon Software. The vendor bought up the XML management and meta data software specialists last November, in a move it hopes will strengthen its own future architecture.

This latest tool is scheduled for an official release later this summer and anyone interested in finding out more should visit **www.adobe.com/enterprise/designerbeta.html** ■

CONTRIBUTE

Contributing to success

The leading Content Management package breaks its maker's records after staggering commercial success

Hot on the heels of some encouraging trading figures last month, Macromedia has announced another reason to be cheerful about one of its flagship products.

Content Management suite Contribute has established itself as the company's fastest-growing new product ever, after estimates revealed that the package currently has over 150,000 customers. This follows a hugely successful launch of the second version in July last year, which has subsequently gone on to receive widespread praise from both industry and end user.

"Macromedia Contribute has had an amazing effect on the way information is shared across our organisation," enthused the US Foodservice Corporation's senior Web designer, Noah Kim. "It has empowered information owners to reduce the technical bottlenecks."

The content management suite has claimed a clutch of awards from computing magazines and sites since its original launch in 2002. Customers have also clearly been impressed by the range of new features that were touted prior to its release, with the software making good on what was promised. Impressive ease of use, drag-and-drop eCommerce integration and the introduction of emerging technologies such as Macromedia's own FlashPaper document standard have reinforced the software giant's confidence within the commercial sector and continued to strengthen its position in the content management market.

"Macromedia Contribute 2 democratises Web publishing by removing the technical barriers and making the process intuitive for users," said Macromedia's President of Products, Norm Meyrowitz. "Contribute simplifies Web content changes and provides unbeatable time to value."

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PRODUCTS

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www.trust.com

This Webcam cuts out image delay with its rapid USB 2 connection. About 40 times faster than usual, its integrated CMOS sensor takes stunning video or stills. At £39.99, it has automatic balancing controls, a fully adjustable focus, quick launch snapshot button and full support for instant messaging apps, plus a CD packed with drivers and editing tools.

PANASONIC DMC-LC1
www.panasonic.com

Panasonic's latest Lumix digicam provides cutting-edge technology in a retro package. Its powerful Leica DC Vario-Summicron lens has an impressive 28mm-90mm optical 3.2x zoom, and a 5-MP CCD. The still imaging possibilities and built-in options for shooting 320x240 video make this a leader, with the large polycrystalline LCD monitor perfect for viewing results. It also has full USB 2 support. RRP £999.

COREL GRAPHICS SUITE 12
www.corel.co.uk

Corel's Graphics Suite makes its twelfth outing and features all the out-of-the-box graphics power you could need. CorelDRAW 12, PHOTO-PAINT 12 and R.A.V.E 3 are all along for the ride and provide perfect solutions for vector-based, digital photography or dynamic animation. A new smart drawing tool makes drawing easier, while cross-product support and interface customisation are new features – all for £422.

NEWS SHORT

SXSW INTERACTIVE FESTIVAL

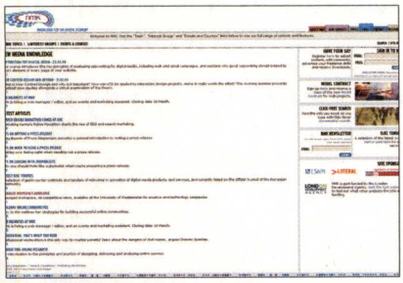
Entering its eleventh year, the South by South West Interactive Festival is a five-day event dedicated to celebrating online design and technology. Hosted at the Hilton Austin Convention Centre, Texas, it attracts some of the industry's most influential and experienced speakers, like human-computer interaction expert Brenda Laurel. An awards ceremony will round off the proceedings by acknowledging cutting-edge sites in a total of nine categories. Nominations for submissions such as lordoftherings.net, alienated.tv, and the BBC's Spooks Spy Academy will all hope to triumph in what is an immensely diverse and exciting roster of work. A special People's Choice award will then be presented to the most popular finalist voted from an SXSW Internet poll. ■

NMK opens doors

Leading UK digital industry network promotes a new resource for new media professionals

Digital and new media businesses have been handed an online technical forum totally dedicated to their professional needs.

Provided by premier industry network New Media Knowledge, **www.nmk.co.uk** is intended as a focal point for communicating technical advice, practical development guides and general news. The site forms part of NMK's continued support for the sector, and will supplement specifically the learning and practice initiatives within courses etc on offer.



■ The NMK site will supplement learning and practice initiatives of seminars, conferences and courses

"The site contains a lot of useful info based on our own activities, but it's also designed to be a collaborative resource, a place where people in the industry can share their own knowledge and learn from the expertise of their peers," revealed NMK Director, Zoe Black.

Visitors can look forward to the coverage of a whole cross-section of topic areas ranging from online interactivity to video games or TV. Fledgling businesses will also benefit from useful advice on getting started, with expert articles from key practitioners included alongside the NMK's own material.

"NMK has consistently worked to help digital media companies develop innovative products and services, and improve their productivity and business practices," explained NMK chair Stephen Whaley. "The new site will enable more people to benefit and help us provide a better service to NMK members."

ASP.NET WHIDBEY

ASP looks forward

Team leader Scott Guthrie spreads the word on ASP.net Whidbey and its potential impact

The new version of ASP.net is set to become the cornerstone of Microsoft's latest Windows release, according to one of the software behemoth's leading lights.

"I think we're going to see an evolvement towards more dynamic Web content, with developers demanding a more personalised site experience," says Scott Guthrie, Team Leader at ASP.net . "The general Web model also needs to change to facilitate the exchange of information between applications and devices."

Whidbey should form an integral part in this vision, and its two-year production period has yielded a wealth of new features. The team worked closely with customers to deliver 'out of the box' support for every aspect of rapidly building data-driven apps. Guthrie believes the combination of new 'master page' template facilities, CSS skinning techniques and the raft of security and navigation tools will suit anyone seeking an all-round solution.

Questions on how the new products will fit in with sister tools or Windows 'Longhorn' shouldn't bother developers. Reassurances are that a commitment to compatibility through a unified platform will continue to promote flexibility and give developers a stable plateau to build on. It also appears that the team are keen to pull competing technologies closer. "Dreamweaver MX 2004 provides support for ASP.net projects, just as we acknowledge the way it fits into the development process. From what we've found, users often choose to work with both packages, so we prefer to view these other applications from a complementary perspective."

Whidbey is scheduled to go into the first phases of beta in June, with limited releases available earlier. Visit **www.asp.net** to keep up with developments. ■

EVENTS DIARY

PixelRaiders 2
6th–8th April
Sheffield UK
Three-day event covering the integration of digital practices within the applied, visual, performance arts, design and media production.

The 6th Asia Pacific Web Conference
14th–17th April
Hangzhou, China
International conference inviting both academic and industry minds to discuss Web technologies and general practices.

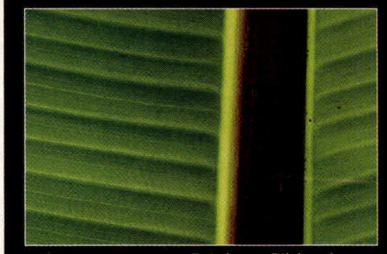
Semi-Permanent 2004
16th–17th April
Sydney, Australia
'Design is Kinky' hosts this major conference, featuring art and design exhibitions from the hottest people in the industry. A total of six speakers will appear, while commercial stalls offer expert presentations and advice.

International Festival of New Technologies, Art and Communication
23rd–30th April
Bilbao, Spain
Concentrates on the challenges posed by cyber culture and the new artistic practices that use digital technology within their development.

Applied Hacking and Intrusion Prevention Course
27th April
London
This hands-on workshop details the methods used by on or offline intruders, with each candidate receiving advice on using genuine hacking tools.

Meta data for Accessibility Workshop
30th April
Brussels
An investigation into how meta data may pave the way for efficient and lasting solutions to accessibility across a multitude of site contexts.

GEL Conference 2004
30th April
New York City
Standing for 'Good Experience Live', this conceptual event encourages designers of any online or offline content to get together and celebrate what constitutes a good experience.



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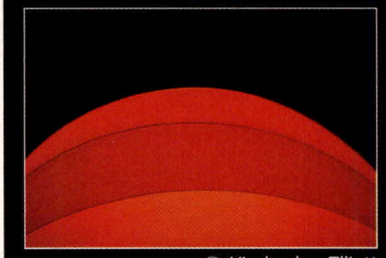

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I'M LOVING IT

What can I say? Excellent magazine, quality tutorials, the articles and the behind-the-scenes areas are informative, and a wonderful shiny disc full of resources and things to do. Thank you *Web Designer* magazine.

One thing, though – why is it you achieve all this wonderful stuff and fill your pages with brilliant tutorials, yet you don't have a Web site of your own?

Lee Bass

Thanks for the praise, Lee. As far as your comments regarding our Web site are concerned, we're in the process of sorting out the long-awaited Web Designer site. We can't tell you what it contains yet – as that's all under wraps – but fans of the magazine will love the site as well. Keep your eyes peeled for future announcements.

DATABASE-FRIENDLY

In Issue 90 of your magazine, one of your readers asked how to get started with Web databases. Any readers who are interested in trying out PHP and MySQL might be interested to know about the free EasyPHP package (**www.easyphp.org**). This download installs very easily to give you a pre-configured combination of Apache Web server, PHP, MySQL, plus phpMyAmdin for managing your MySQL database, as well as some of the useful PEAR extensions to PHP. So you can get started on your PHP/MySQL development without having to spend hours trying to configure all the components to talk to each other.

The EasyPHP front-end is partly in French, but you can download an extra file that provides the English text instead, and there are more tips on installation online at **www.canowhoopass.com/guides/easyphp**.

Chris Webster

Thanks for pointing us in the direction of a very useful download, Chris. Many of the *Web Designer* team know from personal experience how daunting it can be having to install loads of high-end programs before you can even start coding, but the EasyPHP package sounds like the perfect introduction to us. If anybody else has a tip they feel could benefit their fellow *Web Designer* readers, please get in touch at the address on this page.

NAME-CHANGE CONFUSION

I only discovered your 'new' magazine *Web Designer* on issue 88. I couldn't get my hands on number 89 and just got 90! When I asked the Irish importer – Easons – about the mag they hadn't heard of it. I think the confusion arose over the change in name!

Anyway, I think your selection of content and the different levels it's pitched at is excellent. Having read many other publications and eventually dropped them because of their inability to maintain a good mix and standard of content, I hope you manage to keep up the good work so I can continue reading *Web Designer*.

One question I have is how can I get back issues? Or do you plan on putting content on your Web site?

Anthony Meagher

We're sorry to hear you couldn't get hold of a copy of issue 89, Anthony. Easons aren't the only people who've suffered from the odd bit of confusion over our name – with two name changes in six months, it's somewhat inevitable! As far as your question regarding back issues is concerned, take a butchers at page 86 for salvation.

TRACING PAPER

I've just bought issue 91 of your fair magazine, and I wanted to congratulate you on another fine issue. I am particularly impressed with the Dreamweaver tutorial that deals with the Trace Image tool. I've tried fiddling about with this before, but I've always found that I can't get my sites to look exactly the same as the picture I'm trying to replace. Your writer showed me that, with clever use of image maps and a lot of layers and tables, you can actually build something really good. Thanks again.

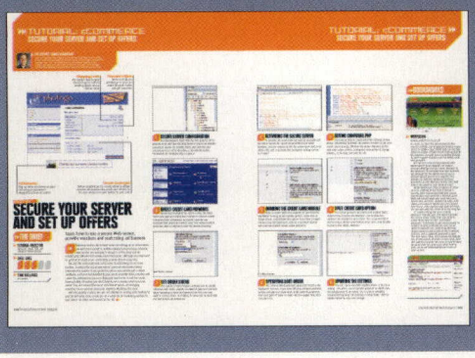
Richard Klein

Cheers for the kind words, Richard. We were chuffed with the tutorial as well, especially as the finished site looked visually impressive as well as being functional.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

THE GOOD AND THE BAD

I've enjoyed reading through your magazine for the first time, and although I enjoyed it I have a couple of comments to make. Firstly I was wondering why as a Web design magazine you don't really have a proper Web site – just the publisher's Web site that looks quite pretty but has no real content to it. It would be great to have the articles and tutorials available online. This would not necessarily have to affect sales of the magazine, as you could have an eSub system to view the latest information.



My second point refers to your multi-part tutorials. These are great, although they're not very helpful if you've bought the magazine for the first time and you find that you are on part five of a tutorial. Would it be possible to include previous parts on the cover CD, or using the ideas above make them available to subscribers via a Web site?

This is the first time I've bought *Web Designer*, and it seems like a very good read with some useful tutorials.

Nick Bramwell

Thanks for your points, Nick. As we touched on in our reply to the letter from Lee Bass earlier on this page, we're currently investigating our Web site situation, and should hopefully have news for you in the near future. We're also looking into a way of getting previous tutorials to you – we've had umpteen emails from readers desperate to get their hands on eCommerce tutorials from previous issues. Keep watching this space for more information.

In the meantime, you might want to take a look at our Back Issues section on page 86 – it may offer you the solution you're looking for.

WEB DESIGNER SUBSCRIPTION WINNER

247 Media Studios

We chat to Ingo Ramin to discover the secrets behind 247 Media's amazing collection of Flash Web sites

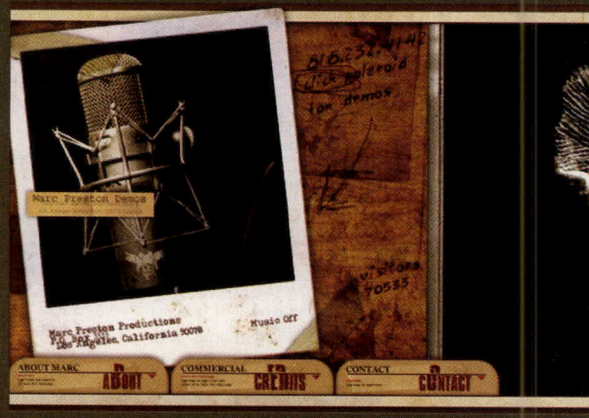
WD: While all of your sites are different, they have a definite 247 style. How would you describe this style?
247: I've really never thought about describing my style. Lots of people would call it retro or grunge.

I think what makes a 247 site a 247 site is the enormous attention to detail and the atmospheric and emotional feel. Also, I try to give every Web site some sort of a theme.

WD: You manage to mix cutting edge Flash techniques with an almost old-fashioned look. Where do you get the inspiration for your creations?
247: Most of my inspiration comes from taking a walk. There is so much great inspiration in nature. The rest comes from watching movies like *Amelie* or *Seven*... even those MTV video clips give me good pointers sometimes.

WD: What software do you use?
247: Photoshop, Flash MX, After Effects, FreeHand, Cinema 4D, Lightwave, Logic Audio and Cool Edit.

WD: You've worked with everyone from German hotels through to US superstars N*SYNC. Which client have you enjoyed working with the most and why?
247: I enjoy working with clients who have imagination – those who are into doing something different.



WD: What are the main differences between doing a corporate site and one for a boy band?
247: Corporate means straight ahead, generic, don't change too much because we are scared to be different... So actually I'm not really into doing sites like this. At least the members of a boy band are artists themselves... okay... a few of them. So it is easier to work with them, and it is fun to create the visuals for their songs.

WD: Tell us about the Lana Landis project (www.lanalandis.com). Where did the idea come from? How long did you spend building the site?
247: As soon as I saw the first picture from her, the idea came to me right away. I spent two weeks just listening to Glenn Miller songs, reading vintage magazines and dreaming about driving a pink Chevvy down a small town street. The whole site actually took two weeks. If I get the vibes, I can finish a site within two days though ;-)

WD: What are you up to at the moment?
247: I'm trying to work on too many projects at once at the moment. I'm often hit by up to four or five projects a week. Besides that, I've been nominated twice as a finalist for the FlashForward conference in San Francisco [*check out next month's* Web Designer *for news on this – Ed*]. I'm very curious to see if I end up as a winner!

WD: How do you feel the upsurge in broadband has affected the Web? Do you design specifically with broadband in mind?
247: I design only with broadband in mind – the ability to stream video and audio and show high-res artwork is fantastic.

WD: What do you think is going to be the most important factor in Web design over the next couple of years?
247: I would say it's the ability to let people interact with highly emotional audio-visuals.

WD: What advice would you give to beginners just starting out in Flash?
247: Don't listen to advice... try to do your own thing.

WD: Germany is currently one of the Web design hotspots. Why do you think this is the case?

■ The sites are different, but they all carry the distinctive 247 style

247: Oh, is it...? To me, the most potential regarding my work is in countries like the US, UK, Japan, Korea and Russia.

WD: What's the new 'motherfish' project all about?
247: Lots of designers have worked hard on a mock, layout or Web site and found the client doesn't like it, but throwing the hard work into the trashcan might not be such a good idea. This is why we created motherfish... a portal where designers can sell their hard work – after a pre-selection process to make sure that motherfish only delivers top-notch design – to potential clients. Lots of high-end designers like Yasuto Suga, Dashiell le Ponce, Scott Thigpen, Shane Mielke and Bryan Ingram have submitted their work to the site, which launched in March 2004.

It's not a template site – it will certainly not be anything like Template Monster. When the design is sold, that's it, no-one else can buy it. People cannot just start designing template sites for motherfish – if a design is suspiciously not designed for a client, it will not be allowed on motherfish. The whole thing is based on trust between the designer and motherfish!

Ingo Ramin is the Creative Director at 247 Media Studios. Find out more information at **www.24-7media.de**.
<END>

GHOSTHUNTER PS2

AS CONSOLE GAMERS AWAITED THE SPOOKY ACTION OF PLAYSTATION 2'S GHOSTHUNTER, THEY GOT ONE HELL OF A SITE AS WELL. **MARK BILLEN** WADES THROUGH THE ECTOPLASM TO CONFRONT THE DESIGN DEMONS BEHIND IT

It's fair to say that the world of the paranormal isn't something everyone subscribes to. Like characters Mulder and Scully from TV's popular *X-Files*, the believers and non-believers will continue to battle over whether such phenomena exist. From the possible extraterrestrial experiences of UFO sightings and alien abduction, to the more chilling obsessions of ghosts and ghoulies, most of us harbour a curiosity for the unknown. This has inspired countless cartoons, comic books and movies, with some of the biggest box-office smashes in recent times deliberately playing the strange card to horrify or amuse.

It didn't take long for video games manufacturers to follow suit and start producing games like Playstation 2's Ghosthunter. With a loosely GhostBusters-esque plot, the game attempts to put a unique spin on equivalent survival titles such as Resident Evil and Silent Hill by introducing a more spiritual feel. Taking control of rookie cop Lazarus Jones, your task is to unearth the dark secret behind the haunting of a Detroit high school. The ensuing battles against an original array of apparitions, blended with some seriously atmospheric visuals, have subsequently made the title a massive hit with gamers.

Part of that success however, can be attributed to the online campaign that accompanied last November's launch. London-based digital production agency Unit9 teamed up with the game's developers to build an exquisite site that still provides a seamless introduction to the product itself. Cutting-edge animation techniques and expert use of brooding multimedia build on the featured in-game material to extend the experience in its own right. Visitors are thrust into a first-person rendition of a spook-infested college building, where dodging the inhabiting fiends is the only way to find exciting nuggets of content.

Somewhere in the shadows we managed to track down and interrogate Unit9's Managing Director, Mark Iremonger, on what possessed the team to take on such a brave challenge...

SCARY STARTS

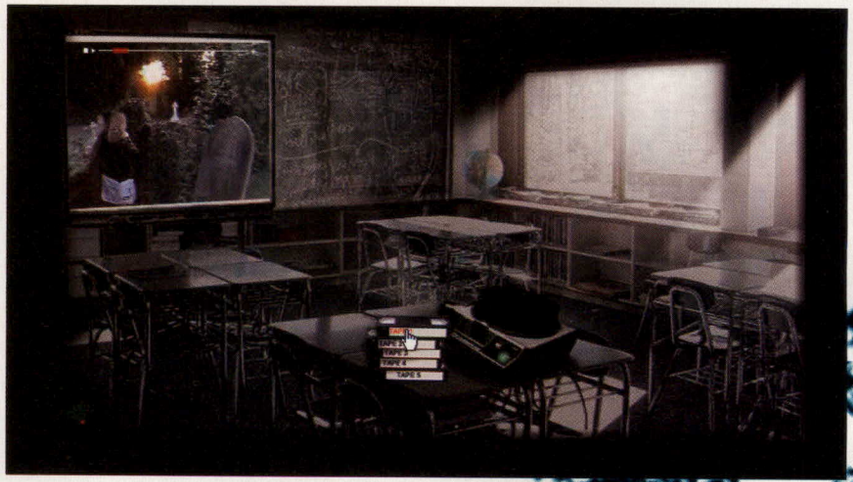
"The hardest part of the site was creating a convincing experience," reflects Iremonger. "And is it possible to spook someone online?" He would know, as not only does he head the agency at Unit9 but he also guided the project as Executive Producer. "This campaign was all about creating desire and anticipation before the launch of Ghosthunter itself," he continues. "Activity around the site was mainly banner placements and a launch mail-out to Sony's existing PS2 player's database."

Spanning the whole of Europe and localised for 21 countries, the concept behind the promotional work was to provide a distinctive edge that would elevate the profile of the product. By building on the themes of the game, the team were able to explore almost cinematic techniques in their bid to develop something original and effective. "There are about 100 significant online campaigns for console games a year," says Iremonger. "The distinctive look and feel of the site helps differentiate the game in a cluttered market."

A major factor in Unit9's adopting this way of thinking was the opportunity to sit down with the very same people who were responsible for Ghosthunter. Time spent with game developers Cambridge Studios was pivotal to establishing a shared vision of how the Web site would deliver a similar experience online. An important part of this was the decision to structure the navigation and content within the backdrop of the derelict school building, despite the game only referencing the location as an unseen plot element.

Ironically, this meant that tying the two commodities together while maintaining creative freedom was still possible, with the team eager to give their target audience something fresh and innovative. "The look and feel of the site are dictated by the objectives we set around atmosphere, rather than to mimic the look of the game," says Iremonger. "PS2 players are generally a Web-savvy broadband audience, which gives us flexibility when it comes to developing a concept and visual language."

"THE LOOK AND FEEL OF THE SITE ARE DICTATED BY THE OBJECTIVES WE SET AROUND ATMOSPHERE"



Locations like the classroom cleverly use gloomy photography and spooky interactive content to create an uneasy atmosphere

SITE STATS

Name: Ghosthunter PS2
URL: www.ghosthunter-game.com
Designed by: Unit9
Tools: Macromedia Flash MX, Flash Professional 2004, PHP
Effort: Approximately three weeks
Personnel: Team of ten technical staff and producers
History: Went live November 2003
The Team: Producer/Creative – Piero Frescobaldi
Creative Director/Design (Corridors/Classroom) – Ben Hibon
Technical/Creative/Sound – David Yates Buckley; Design (Lab) – Steve Price; Sound – Steve Nolan
Developers – Tony Volpe, Chris Peck
Project Manager – Richard Hackett
IT/Hosting – Karl Tilbury
Executive Producer – Mark Iremonger

KEY FEATURES

A suitably eerie collection of spooky paraphernalia sets the scene...

Extra stuff

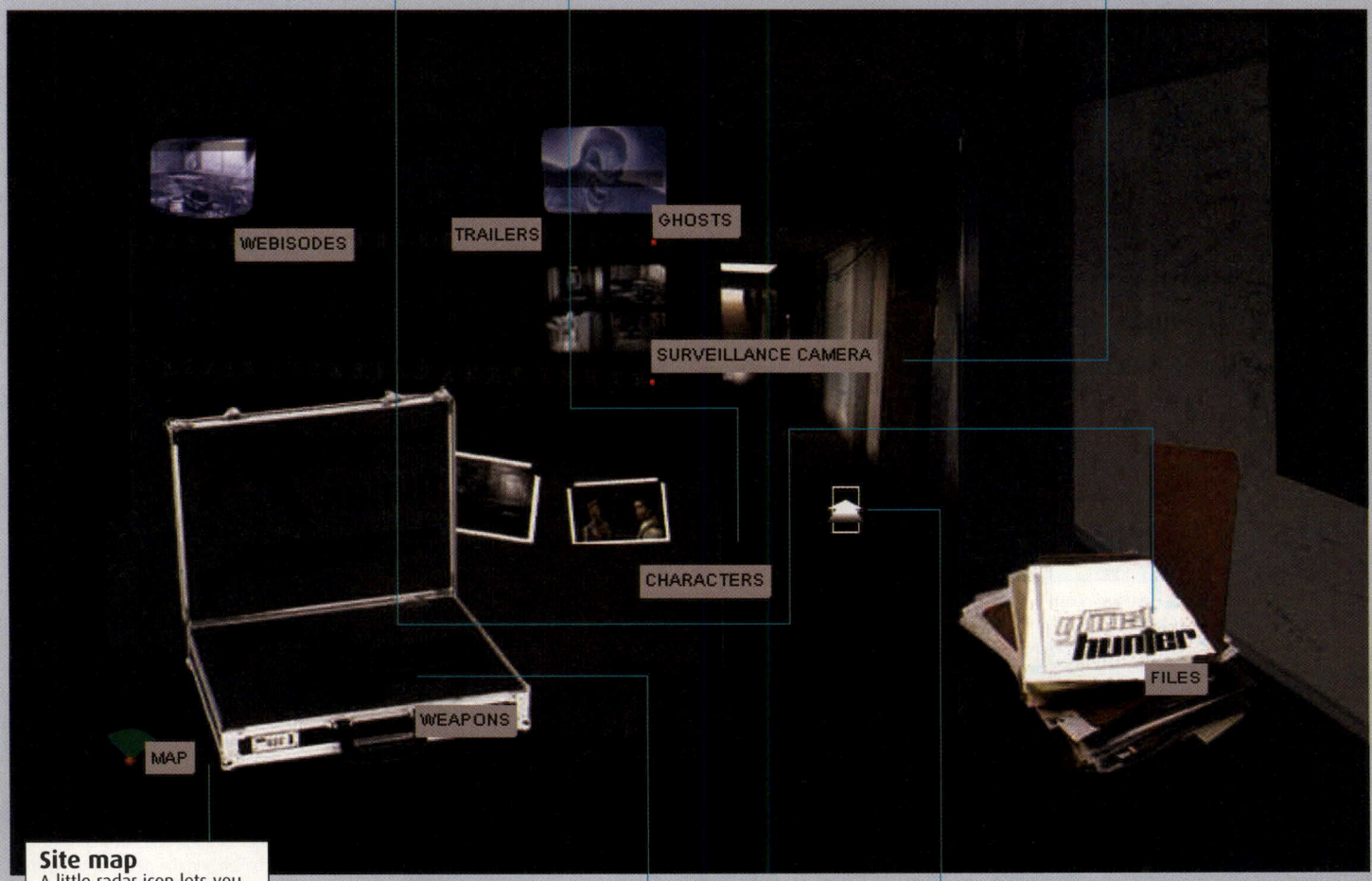
Ghosthunter also makes an appearance on Sony's own Playstation 2 site, which can be accessed directly from here. Additional material such as reviews and downloads are just a few of the things you can pick up

Character profile

The heroes from the game can all be identified from the Character Dossier, giving biographies and exclusive images. An animated collection of action stills is also available alongside by clicking the Photograph objects

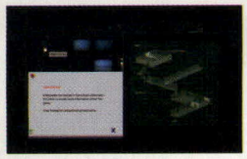
Camera shot

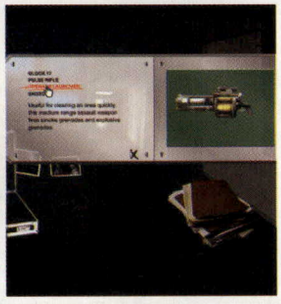
Rows of flickering monitors are used to trigger the Surveillance Cameras, Ghost Gallery and a selection of game clips. A TV monitor and VCR object are cleverly used to display each one, with some great animation tricks thrown in



Site map

A little radar icon lets you open up a 3D map of the school building. From here you can get an idea of how the location pans out and also view your own location in relation to where you can go





Great guns

Flipping open the Weapons Case lets you cycle through some of the awesome guns that are featured in the game. They all rotate in true 3D and come with a brief description of the damage they can do

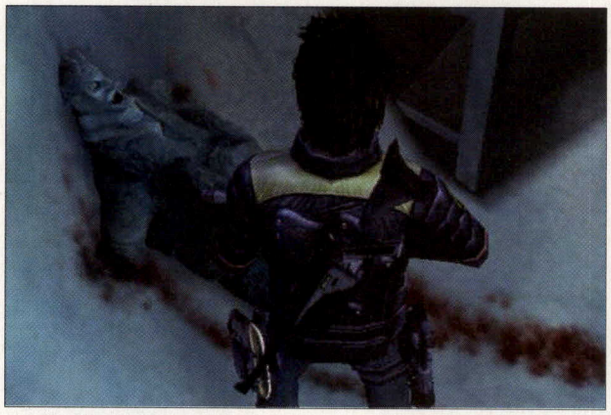
Mouse trail

An arrow cursor thoughtfully guides any visitors through doorways and out through sinister corridors to various rooms. Ghostly figures appear at random as you stumble across a host of surprising content

Subsequent feedback from impressed visitors has also vindicated a lot of the hard work the team did prototyping the many techniques on show. Large amounts of traffic and a continuing stream of positive comments from gamers have added further credit to what has proven a successful commercial campaign. The most favoured aspects have been attributed to the general atmosphere that the clever use of sound, unexpected animations and dark photography manages to convey. "Random events and navigation of the halls successfully creates a feeling of confusion without frustration," reveals Iremonger. "The combination of sound, 'theatre' and interaction to create atmosphere in the corridors has also proven popular."

Although it's still early days for receiving any critical acclaim from the Web world itself, the team have been encouraged by upcoming nominations for the 'Revolution Awards' and several others to be judged later this year.

■ Stalking through the halls and corridors will unearth new areas or animated ghouls



■ Screenshots from the game itself are neatly woven into the rest of the Web site and will delight gamers

"VIDEO SEQUENCES START AS SOON AS THE ROOM IS LOADED, HEIGHTENING THE SENSE OF UNEASE"

DARK DEVELOPMENTS

At the end of a project lifecycle of around ten weeks, the site went live in November to deliberately coincide with the game hitting the shelves. Development had also demanded the talents of a ten-strong technical team that were largely structured around their specialised roles or the different sections of content. Two dedicated designers were assigned responsibility for certain parts of the school map, such as the corridors and lab, while general engineering and programming duties fell to two technicians. The added emphasis on shaping a more rounded multimedia experience was then realised by assigning audio personnel, before a Creative Director and Project Manager coordinated their efforts.

Methods of working were a direct reflection of where the project was going to go, and an important factor was how the team realised the ambitious ideas they strived for. "We look at every brief from communication, design and technology perspectives. We come up with a concept that works and then explore how/if it can be achieved," explains Iremonger. "This is why we have designers and developers collaborating – sometimes difficult to achieve. When it works it creates tremendous synergy."

In fact, the Executive Producer believes it was for this very reason that Unit9 was granted the project in the first place. Their work followed a particularly rigorous and competitive pitch process which hinged on the exciting marketing concepts the winning party could put together.

Knowledge of the team's previous work for clients such as Nintendo and Reebok counted as heavily as the desire to mimic the game's vibe. "I think businesses have learnt that it's difficult to keep an in-house team that has the multi-disciplinary and creative skills required to create online marketing and advertising media, compared to buying the talent and experience when it's needed."

■ Lead character Lazarus Jones tackles all kinds of frightful creations

Because of the obvious need for dynamic and interactive content, the team could only really achieve what they wanted with Flash technology. Both the MX and 2004 Professional versions made up the core toolset, although the inherent advantages of this approach were joined by some potential worries. The movie-heavy pages would almost certainly alienate those visitors who either didn't have Flash support or a connection capable of handling everything. "To make the job a bit more difficult, experiential content typically requires great sound and compelling graphics, both of which are big bandwidth monsters," observes the team's Technical Director David Yates Buckley. "We used Flash 7 to help us address the internationalisation issues head on, and saved a lot of time during development, as we made changes to the experiential files using batch JSFL scripts."

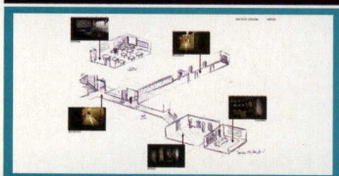
MODEM SUPPORT

Similarly, many of the more experimental aspects within the original pitch were scaled down to enable 56Kb modem support. This was a significant climb-down from initial plans to make the site broadband only, while other constraints on time and budget meant features like a 'Tell a Friend' bonus area had to be curtailed.

Something they were very successful in however, was delivering extremely speedy video content without succumbing to the perils of streaming. By integrating the clips into Flash itself, they were also able to embed them seamlessly into a location, with the classroom project a perfect example. Video sequences start as soon as the room is loaded, heightening the sense of unease, and feature some of the footage distributed during the viral campaign. "We work with a lot of rich media sites that can have 'peaky' Flash crowds because of their entertainment or viral nature," says Iremonger. "The site hosting was set up to make sure the site and clips were served quickly."

This sense of pushing the technical barriers in order to gain an emotional response from the audience seems to resonate as a palpable achievement for everyone involved. Right from the outset the team wanted to create a synergy between the game and its promotion, and they take the most pride from delivering something that bucks the trend for interactive media. "Overall, we are happy we've achieved a different look from other PS2 sites, and have gone just a little way to challenging the genre of the game Web site," Iremonger beams. "We are already seeing new sites taking a similar approach." ■

IN STAGES



One key technique the Unit9 team used to develop and communicate their design ideas was to storyboard the virtual school building. Sketches were produced to illustrate an overview of the map and the main locations. Mock-ups for the digital backgrounds were then added to signify where everything would go.

Each of the general backdrops for rooms and corridors was then broken down into the various frames or component shots. These were used to detail subtle changes in lighting or viewing perspective, as well as determine where the ghostly figures would be inserted for animation.

The many interactive elements in the rooms were also explored by walking through each segment of content. This image shows early shots of the main Lab environment, with features like the Monster and Weapons Viewer looking very different. These were later refined to arrive at the final designs.

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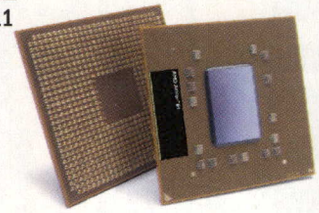

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119032	Maxtor MaXLine II 300GB ATA/133	£180

KEYBOARDS

SKU	Product name	Price inc. VAT
120535	Trust Power Plus Keyboard	£5
121558	Logitech Internet Navigator	£23
121545	Logitech Cordless Desktop Deluxe	£34
121552	Logitech Cordless Desktop MX Bluetooth	£119

MICE

SKU	Product name	Price inc. VAT
119264	Labtec 3-Button Mouse PS/2	£3
120879	Logitech Cordless Mouse USB/PS2	£20
114123	Microsoft Notebook Optical Mouse	£22
106437	Logitech Cordless Mouseman Optical	£43

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WORDS: NICK SWEENEY IMAGERY: ENGINE

BUILD A SITE IN 24 HOURS

CAN YOU CREATE A PROFESSIONAL SITE IN A DAY? WE SENT **NICK SWEENEY** ON A MISSION – HE'S ONLY GOT 24 HOURS TO CRACK THE CASE, AND THE CLOCK IS TICKING...

BUILD A SITE IN A DAY

We all know that Rome wasn't built in a day, or that, according to the Book of Genesis, the first site-building project took six days and a well-earned rest. But if Jack Bauer can rid the world of a global threat in just 24 hours, is it possible to spend the same time creating a Web site that won't look as stretched as a misleading sub-plot? Well, you won't know until you try...

If the truth be known, anyone with a decent amount of Web-building knowledge can put together a set of linked pages in a matter of hours and call it a finished Web site. Whether they'd be proud of the results achieved is another matter entirely.

That said, building a site to a tight deadline can often improve the finished product: it forces you to concentrate on features that add the most immediate value and develop techniques that avoid unnecessary duplication. Plenty of sites which took months to design might well have turned out better had they been thrown together in a quick-and-dirty day. Being able to make the most of those 24 precious hours though, isn't necessarily a skill that comes naturally to Web designers. That's why we're going to provide the ultimate survival guide to what could be – cue voiceover – the longest day of your life. Our goal: to build J.R. Hartley's *World of Flyfishing*. The time starts now.

"BUILDING A SITE TO A TIGHT DEADLINE FORCES YOU TO CONCENTRATE ON FEATURES THAT ADD THE MOST IMMEDIATE VALUE"

PLANNING – MIDNIGHT TO 8AM

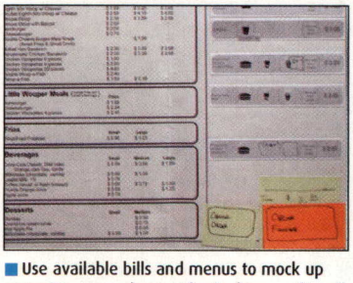
Now we know you're itching to fire up Dreamweaver and get cracking, but we're going to start off low-tech. For the first third of your site-building day, don't even switch on the PC. Go into another room with an A4 pad, a felt tip and a box of sticky notes.

Remember the teachers who told you to spend as much time planning your exam essays as writing them? The same applies here: if you start coding or fiddling with images too quickly, you'll find it almost impossible to abandon your efforts, even if you think of something better. Although professional designers often create prototypes in Photoshop or even PowerPoint, it's almost always to impress a boss or client, rather than assist them during the site-building process.

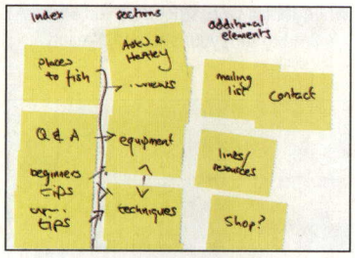
Since you're working on your own, with the clock ticking down rapidly, it's more important to give yourself the freedom to jot down new ideas while scribbling out old ones – something that's much easier if you haven't invested a heavy amount of your time in producing shiny colour mock-ups. Instead, grab a pen and follow a few brainstorming drills served up by ace designer Matt Jones (**www.blackbeltjones.com**), which get to grips with the features, structure and ultimately the page layout of our site.

The first technique builds on the classic 'user-centred' approach, in which designers think of 'personas' – fictional users with different reasons for visiting the site, based on their level of experience and skill. Draw up a graph, with 'experience' on one axis and 'ability' on the other, and imagine three or four people who represent different intersections: the experienced flyfisherman who's curious to pick up new tips; the beginner who's eager to learn from scratch and find new places to fish; the long-suffering angler who never seems to catch anything. Asking 'what do these people want from the site?' enables you to come up with a list of features that don't just reflect the designer's viewpoint.

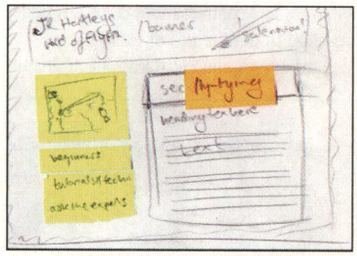
The next step is to hone down those features to fit our 24-hour remit, by using a 'value sieve' to work out priorities from our feature list. Draw another graph, this time labelling the X-axis as 'value' and the Y-axis as 'complexity'. Plot the list of features on this graph. Those that end up in the top right corner – tricky, but valuable – are the ones to address first



Use available bills and menus to mock up your site – we only want basic shapes, after all



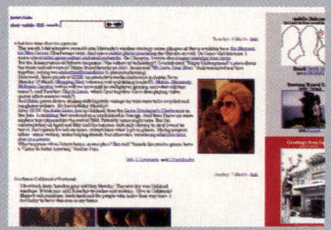
Before you even think about opening Photoshop, get your sticky notes out first



It doesn't matter if you're not an artist – a hand-drawn site map is an absolute essential

GETTING STARTED

It's a lot easier building a site quickly when you know what it's going to be about. Finding inspiration to create a new site can be much trickier, especially given the number of award-winning creations out there. Here's the secret: a Web site doesn't have to be 'about' anything. Or rather, it can be about anything, everything and nothing. A great example is Justin Hall's site at **www.links.net**, which began ten years ago as a place to store his favourite links, and gradually turned into a sprawling, glorious account of his life – a life that was itself changed by the fact that he recorded it on his site. So start with the online equivalent of doodling. Set up a weblog at **www.blogger.com** or the more elaborate **www.typepad.com**, and share thoughts, images and design ideas, while checking what other bloggers are doing. Visit sites such as Kaliber10000 (**www.k10k.org**) or A List Apart (**www.alistapart.com**) and use the code that interests you. Be a magpie: pick out the shiny things and put them in your own site. Once you get over the fear that your site won't be 'perfect', you're well on your way to building something pretty good. After all, while the silly icons are a fading memory, every site is still 'under construction'.



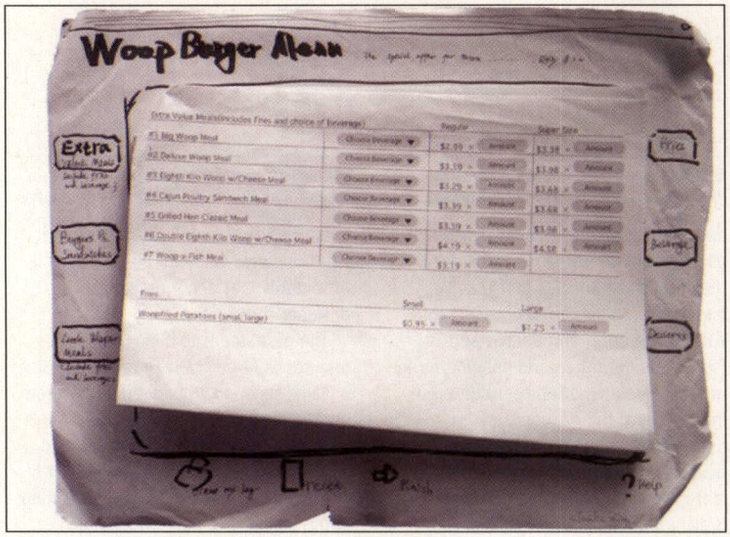
Even seemingly mundane sites can become popular, as Justin Hall proves

when thinking about site structure. Below them, you'll find 'easy wins' that can be added without too much strain. In the bottom left are the sort of features that you should consider if you have time. Top left – forget about them.

From here onwards, you can start translating those features to your site. Keep it simple for the moment: go back to your personas, consider their interests, then imagine the steps they'd take from page to page, thinking in terms of functions and content rather than design or layout. Scribble those steps on sticky notes, slap them down in order, and you should eventually end up with a site map of sorts. Try not to think of it as a strict hierarchy. It should be more like a house, where doors connect rooms that can be reached from different directions.

Now we can finally start thinking about page layout. But it's still not the time to fire up Photoshop, no matter how good your design skills, because it's too easy to get caught up in the details. Instead, stay low-tech and sketch out your page designs on paper, using sticky notes in place of buttons, menus and other page furniture, so you can move them around the layout and see what works.

Before you start preparing graphics or code, try testing out your paper prototype. Get a volunteer to play a persona – for instance, 50-year-old fisherman Reg – and 'click' on buttons by pointing to them, while thinking aloud. You'll probably need to tweak things again; what's obvious to the designer isn't always clear to someone seeing it for the first time. When things work smoothly, you'll know it's time to turn your site into a reality.



■ In the beginning, it doesn't matter how messy your plan looks – as long as it's usable and effective

EXTREME MAKEOVER

If you already have a site that meets your approval, does any of this advice apply to you? Well, if you're entirely happy, there's no need to change a thing. But since you're reading this magazine, we're guessing you might want to pick up tips on how to improve your skills – in which case, you ought to be able to find some inspiration.

It's understandable why many designers are reluctant to go back to older sites, especially those relying on intricate table layouts or FONT tags: one change, and the entire page tends to fall apart. If you find yourself in that situation, it's well worth considering a redesign based upon external CSS and layers. Separating design from content results in a site that's easier to maintain in the future. Dreamweaver's 'Convert Tables To Layers' tool helps out here, but it's often easier to rebuild from scratch; print out a screenshot and mark areas of your templates that fit together logically.

Once you've whipped your code into shape, it's easier to contemplate other changes. Follow our tips on user-centred design to get a sense of how potential visitors to your site might benefit from changes to the interface, and consider whether drop-in features such as a search box or a comments facility might add to what's already there. Improve accessibility by thinking in terms of using image-replacement tricks for elements of 'gif-text', CSS-based mouseover effects and semantic markup. Finally, if you're feeling brave, look into whether your site could benefit from using a dynamically scripted back-end. The rise of the weblog shows how sites flourish when they're easy to update: investing a little time now might save you a lot of time in the future.

GRAPHICS – 8AM TO 1PM

We'll devote the morning shift to developing the basic look and feel of your prototype into something that's getting towards a fully-fledged site. In short, it's time to start thinking about graphics. But don't fire up your image editor just yet. It's important to start thinking about your coding approach, to ensure that you don't waste time creating graphics you'll have to change further down the line.

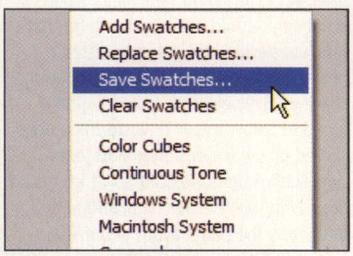
"YOU CAN SPEND A WHOLE LIFETIME USING PHOTOSHOP AND STILL NOT DISCOVER EVERYTHING, SO DON'T TRY TO START A CRASH COURSE WHEN DEADLINES ARE TIGHT"

Are you looking for a fluid layout or one that's fixed within a specific area of the browser window? Will the site's graphical elements be dynamic, such as menus and rollover effects? Can some graphical effects, like borders or transparency, be better handled by CSS? You may only know the answer to some of these questions once you've started drafting layouts, and your choices will depend on your relative skills with graphics and coding. However, you'll always make quicker progress and get better results by treating graphics and coding as part of a single design process rather than two separate stages. That's why Fireworks and Dreamweaver combine to allow 'round-trip editing', where the combination of code and images is maintained when moving between the two programs.

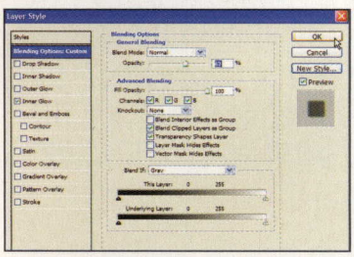
Now to the process of editing itself – and it's worth emphasising that while we'll concentrate on Photoshop, Fireworks and Paint Shop Pro, you should stick with the software you're most familiar with. You can spend a lifetime using Photoshop and still not discover everything, so don't start a crash course when time is tight. That said, it's worth spending a few minutes getting familiar with features that are designed to speed up your workflow – it'll save you hours later.

Top of this list is the ability to store sequences of complex processes so they can be re-used whenever necessary. We'll refer to them by their Photoshop name of 'actions'; they have different names in other programs but they all work the same way. Many people are reluctant to create actions, thinking that you have to get things exactly right first time. Not so: in Photoshop, before you start a task you're likely to repeat, open the Actions palette, click the Record icon, give your action a title, and forget about it until you've finished the task. Click on the Stop icon, and you'll be able to review and delete any unnecessary steps. You can also insert 'stop points' which allow you to add contextual elements at any point, such as size variables.

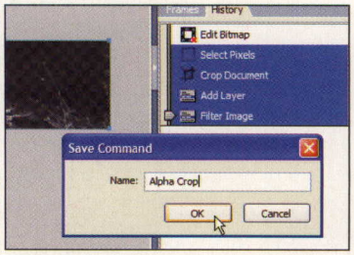
A similar trick to keep handy is batch processing, which applies the same changes to a selected range of files. While this is usually associated with simple tasks, there's no reason why you can't apply more complex transformations. In Photoshop, go to the File menu and select Automate, Batch. You can then choose the tasks, the order in which they're



■ Save your palette swatches in Photoshop – it'll save you valuable time in the long run

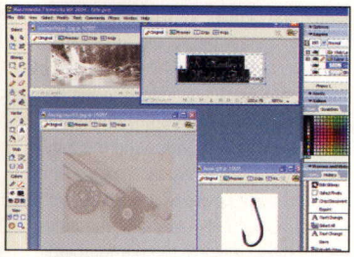


■ Photoshop's layer styles are a great way to create buttons very quickly and easily



■ Fireworks lets you save time with its Commands tool, similar to Photoshop's actions

■ Using a variety of techniques, it's possible to fashion professional graphics in next to no time

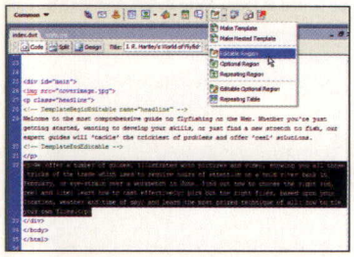


Half the day gone, and we've finally got our site graphics up and running, thanks to Fireworks

carried out, and set a directory for the processed files. Use batch processing to create thumbnails, export files or change filenames: in essence, to handle all the tedious, repetitive jobs and leave you more time to be creative.

What about creativity then? Well, we can't teach you inspiration but we can suggest ways to prevent your tools from getting in the way. For consistency, use the colour wheel to pick out a palette for your design – do rough mock-ups to check whether they work together in the environment you're creating – and then create a custom swatch so that you've always got those colours close to hand. Use layer styles rather than filters to adjust images. It makes it easier both to make changes to individual images if they're needed, and to duplicate effects in other files by combining layers into layer sets. Layer styles are also useful when creating rollovers. Use a colour adjustment, texture or a glow effect, and select it before you export the image. And keep your images in your editor's native format (PSD or PNG) until you're ready to build with them, then export them to the appropriate Web-friendly format.

Lastly, if a particular effect is eating up the clock, chances are that someone on the Web has already done something similar, or at least has an add-in that will make life easier. You'll find Photoshop Actions available for download from Adobe Studio Exchange (**share.studio.adobe.com**) and ActionFX (**www.actionfx.com**). For even more automation when creating navigation buttons, look at MacButton (**www.bitgenius.com/english**) and Crystal Button (**www.crystalbutton.com**).



Working with templates in Dreamweaver means you only have to edit the active regions

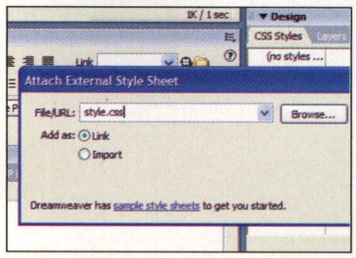
CODING QUICKLY: 1PM – 7PM

The moment of truth has arrived. You have a stack of slick, optimised images and a general idea of how you want to fit them together into page templates; you also have the all-important site copy, tuned to fit the site structure you planned out earlier. So now's the time to turn this into a functioning site – in just six hours. So get Dreamweaver up and running, create a new site entry, copy your images across to a subfolder, and let's get cracking.

Your first instinct should be to customise the Dreamweaver interface for maximum efficiency. That means tweaking the sidebar panels so that everything you need is available within the click of a mouse. Make sure the Assets panel is open – ideally, regroup it so that it's on its own. This gives you instant access to images within the site hierarchy, linked URLs and much more.

From now on, the emphasis is on building in a way that minimises duplication – and with it, the risk of introducing errors. The first step is to create an HTML page with a CSS stylesheet that will serve as a template for the rest of the site. (We're keeping it simple here, with a 'one size fits all' approach. You may want more than one set of templates if your site design requires different layouts for different sections.) Start very generally: go to the File menu and select New, Basic Page, HTML, then click on Create to open a new file with the basic HTML structure in place. If you've done your planning properly, you should have your page templates blocked off into logical sections – eg a top banner, a navigation sidebar and a main content area. Create <DIV> elements for each of these, with an ID name, and leave the content blank for the moment.

Next, open the Design panel and click on the New CSS Style icon, choosing to create styles in a new external stylesheet, and create the stylesheet file when prompted. Now start creating your styles, using the New CSS Style wizard. Begin by defining basic elements inside the BODY tag, such as the page background colour

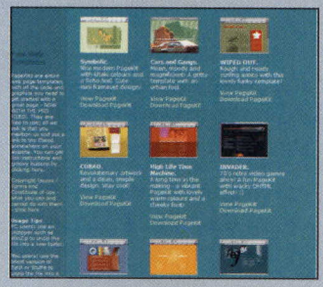


If you're serious about building great sites quickly, then you need to start using CSS

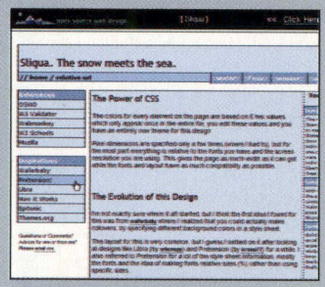
SIX OF THE BEST TEMPLATE SITES

1. TEMPLATEMONSTER (www.templatemonster.com)
Flash sites, entire site structures, corporate logos, unique designs tuned to your personal needs: you name it, TemplateMonster offers it, albeit at a price. Most other commercial template sites are affiliated with TemplateMonster, so it's best starting here before branching out elsewhere.

2. SquidFingers background designs (www.squidfingers.com/patterns/)
As designer Matt Haughey puts it: "Background images have been dorky for so long they're cool again." They are best used in conjunction with CSS layers to avoid colour clashes. Travis Beckham's designs are just the job – subtle backgrounds that add instant panache without hogging bandwidth.



3. Elated PageKits (www.elated.com/pagekits/)
The people at Elated offer 40 attractive page kits for free download, comprising CSS-driven HTML files and associated images. You can also download the PSD files for each kit, useful Photoshop actions, and follow the site's tutorials on image slicing, image manipulation and many other techniques.



4. Open Source Web Design (www.oswd.org)
If you're looking for clean, adaptable templates that rely primarily on CSS and won't cost you a penny, then OSWD is definitely a worthwhile destination. You won't find Flash-driven masterpieces here, but you will find designs and design elements that are easy to customise to your own needs.

5. Theory7 (www.theory7.com)
Theory7 provides Flash-based templates that drive both the basic user interface and dynamic elements such as guestbooks, forums and traffic analysis. Once you buy the templates, you get a licence that includes commercial re-use and email support. It's a smart choice if you're stuck and your project fits the general style of the template model.

6. BoxedArt (www.boxedart.com)
While BoxedArt is another commercial site, it's based upon subscriptions. At a pretty reasonable $45 per year, members can access hundreds of templates, navigational elements and animations. The subscription model ensures you won't feel ripped off if the template you've just downloaded turns out to be a turkey.

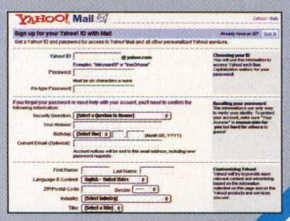
WHEN THINGS GET COMPLICATED...

Our site-in-a-day is pretty simple by modern standards, since even some very basic sites can now be considered 'dynamic'. For instance, a weblog built with Movable Type stores page content in a database combined with specially tagged templates to generate pages, often on an on-demand basis, like when a new comment is added to an entry.

If you're building a site that relies upon server-side scripting or some other back-end technology, it's vital to consider this once you move from basic sketches to more detailed planning. If you're retrieving database fields, you need to 'budget' for the longest possible entry to avoid template overspill. If you're allowing users to add new entries, take into account the possibility that Sir Ranulph Twistleton-Wykeham Fiennes might be annoyed if he's forced by the site to limit his surname to 20 letters. Use fluid widths if possible, and don't presume that the site's data model reflects every potential user.

The biggest disadvantage of building dynamic sites though, is that you don't get to see much of what's going on during the coding process. Dreamweaver helps in some circumstances, with its 'Live Data' mode. If you're working with ColdFusion, ASP, PHP or JSP, set up a testing server and a database connection, and you'll be able to enter dummy variables and use the Design view to see how dynamic pages would be rendered. If you're using a different back-end, you'll need to get into the habit of uploading pages then testing them in the browser, rather than relying on your editor.

Finally, devote more time to final testing your dynamic site, because it's here where you'll find the biggest bugs. Do your utmost to break your site: enter silly request data, leave fields blank or fill them with gibberish.



and image, and the default font family. Add site-wide styles incrementally: set a font size and colour for the P tag, then customise link colours and effects by defining the A tag and the related behaviours for A:visited and A:hover. Create classes for any particular text effects, such as headings. This is frowned upon by purists, but it's less time-consuming and allows greater control than redefining header styles.

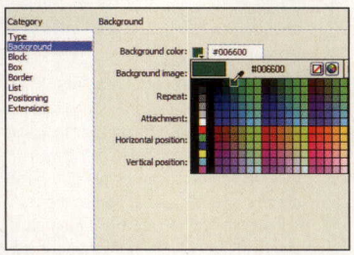
Once you've got these styles laid out, turn to the positioning of your layers and create ID elements (prefixed with a '#') for each of the DIVs you've created. If you want pixel-perfect arrangement, use absolute positioning; for fluid layouts, use a combination of relative positioning and the 'Float' and 'Clear' properties to define how the layers should line up. If you're still uncertain of the dimensions you need – your images should dictate them in most cases – use the Design view in Dreamweaver to draw out the layers, then export the resulting style elements to your stylesheet.

With your basic design mapped out, start coding, using a combination of the Design view and the Preview function (F12) to see how things look in the browser window. All the time, look for ways to keep your code clean, by converting inline styles or layout hacks into CSS classes in your external stylesheet. Use the Dreamweaver interface to your advantage: use keyboard shortcuts or the Layout menu to add tags, and open the Properties panel to add ALT tags and dimensions to images. Save chunks of code as snippets, so that you can copy them back into your page with a single shortcut. If you've created your navigation bar using the Slice tool in Fireworks, you can import the HTML directly into your page. Alternatively, for navigation elements and rollover effects, go to Insert, Image Object, select the appropriate wizard and fill in the blanks. Dreamweaver will output valid HTML and add the appropriate JavaScript elements to the HEAD section of your page.

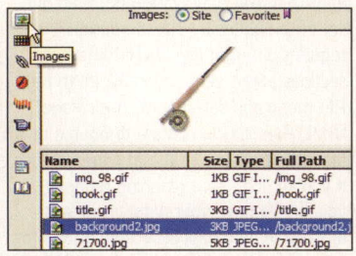
"WHILE IT'S OFTEN A SIMPLE WAY TO ADD RICH MEDIA TO A SITE, IT'S VITAL TO AVOID USING FLASH AS A FILLER WHEN WORKING WITHIN SUCH TIGHT TIME CONSTRAINTS"

When you've finished, you should have a page that can be used as a template for the rest of your site. So go to the File menu and select Save as Template. Once that's done, go to the Code view and select each element of the design that will differ from page to page across your site – ie the areas devoted to content. Then go to the Common Layout toolbar, click on the Template icon – the green folder and pencil – and select Editable Region, to label the region as editable. The selected code will be surrounded by comment tags. If you switch to the Design view, you'll see these areas outlined in turquoise with tabs indicating the name you've given each region. Now you'll be able to create new pages based upon this template, and only need edit the areas within those regions. More importantly, you can make site-wide changes to the static elements simply by editing the template and going to Modify, Template, Update Pages. This, combined with CSS, ensures that you won't have to make changes on a file-by-file basis, speeding up the site-building process and reducing the risk of introducing errors to your code.

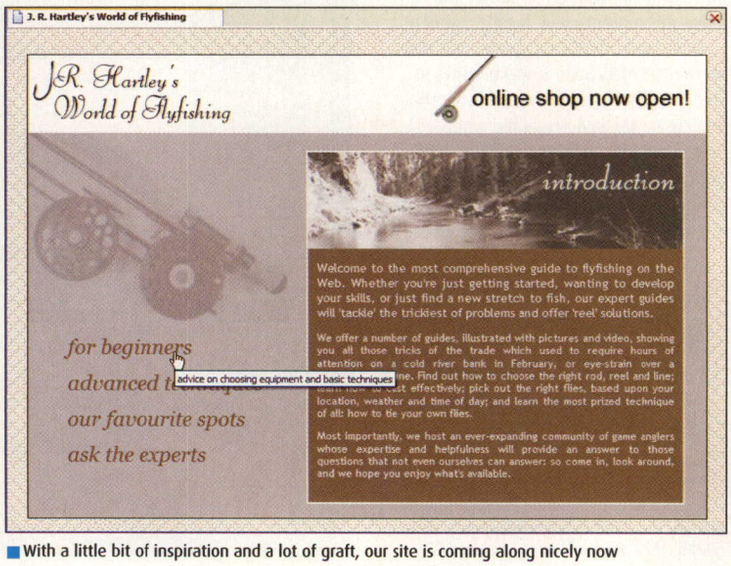
A brief word about Flash: while it's often a quick and simple way to add rich media to a site, within such tight constraints it's vital to avoid using it as filler. Long Flash intros remain stubbornly popular, in spite of drawing scorn since the first one whirled onto our browser windows – but that doesn't mean you should discount it entirely. If you're really pressed for time, or having problems getting DHTML or CSS effects to work consistently across browsers – a far too common occurrence in spite of supposed standards support – Flash can at least guarantee consistency for elements like dynamic navigation bars. It's always going to be a trade-off, but with templates such as Theory7's menu schemes offering a plug-and-play approach to site creation, you can at least concentrate on getting original content working properly.



Creating stylesheets in Dreamweaver is a piece of cake, thanks to the built-in options

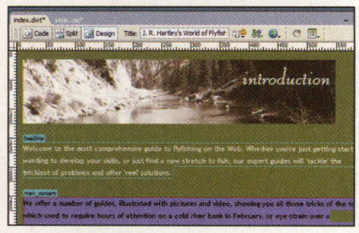


Make sure you turn on the Assets panel in Dreamweaver to keep tabs on your site graphics


J. R. Hartley's World of Flyfishing
J.R. Hartley's World of Flyfishing
online shop now open!
introduction
Welcome to the most comprehensive guide to flyfishing on the Web. Whether you're just getting started, wanting to develop your skills, or just find a new stretch to fish, our expert guides will 'tackle' the trickiest of problems and offer 'reel' solutions.
We offer a number of guides, illustrated with pictures and video, showing you all those tricks of the trade which used to require hours of attention on a cold river bank in February, or eye-strain over a
location, weather and time of day; and learn the most prized technique of all: how to tie your own flies.
Most importantly, we host an ever-expanding community of game anglers whose expertise and helpfulness will provide an answer to those questions that not even ourselves can answer: so come in, look around, and we hope you enjoy what's available.
for beginners
advanced
our favourite spots
ask the experts
advice on choosing equipment and basic techniques

With a little bit of inspiration and a lot of graft, our site is coming along nicely now

When you're building in Dreamweaver, don't be scared to leave notes indicating future designs



The joy of templates can be seen here – just fill in the blanks you've created and you're away

Dependable Hosting for Unlimited Websites.

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Control panels for your customers at no extra charge. Your clients manage their account and seek technical support via their own web based control panel reducing your administration overheads. You have total control over the format of your client's control panels for complete integration with your brand.

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View graphical usage statistics for your web sites, see how many people are visiting your sites, where they come from, what search keywords they use to find you and more. You may also download raw log files for analysis using your own software.

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We are committed to providing the best service and technical support for our customers. Our devoted team will solve your problems and tend to your needs by telephone and email for no extra charge.

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Andy Clegg - *Absolute Web Design*

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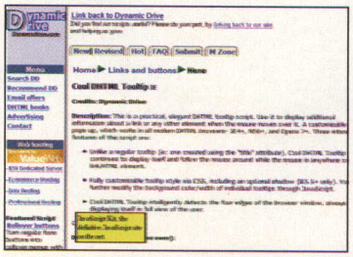
TEMPLATES AND FREEBIES: 7PM – 10PM

It's late, and things aren't working out. We've all been there. It might be a case of cross-browser incompatibility, or code that just doesn't display the way it ought. Never fear: instead, close down those 14 browser windows and open up a new one – this time in search of the array of customisable templates, plug-ins and scripts that can save you and your site from complete breakdown.

The richest seam when it comes to finding online disaster relief is in the form of script libraries that improve upon those provided with Dreamweaver. One of the best central sources is Dynamic Drive (**www.dynamicdrive.com**) – if you're looking for a particular style of rollover, pop-up effect or form handler, it's a great place to start.

If it's a discussion forum that you want, don't even think about coding it yourself. Download a free UBB clone such as phpBB (**www.phpbb.com**), tweak the basic configuration to match your site's default colour scheme, and you'll have a fully-featured bulletin board running on your site in a matter of minutes. For something slightly less sophisticated, add an externally hosted guestbook or commenting facility by signing up with Haloscan (**www.haloscan.com**) or Enetation (**www.enetation.co.uk**). If it's a site-wide search facility that you're after, you can do a lot worse than signing up with PicoSearch (**www.picosearch.com**).

For more drastic online assistance, when things simply aren't coming together, consider an entire site management framework. Site publishing tools such as Movable Type (**www.movabletype.org**), b2 (**cafelog.com**) and pMachine (**www.pmachine.com**) offer free or low-cost suites that use database back-ends and templates to make adding new pages and entire sections much simpler, especially with larger sites.



Find yourself a host of free site-building scripts at the excellent Dynamic Drive Web site

TESTING: 10PM – MIDNIGHT

Testing should be an integral part of the design process, from the first sketches through to the final stages. So test while you're preparing your graphics, looking at colour, layout and especially loading time, as indicated in the status bar of a program such as Fireworks. Test while you're building HTML by setting up Dreamweaver to 'preview' in the browsers you're targetting, and get into the habit of hitting F12 every time you make a substantial change.

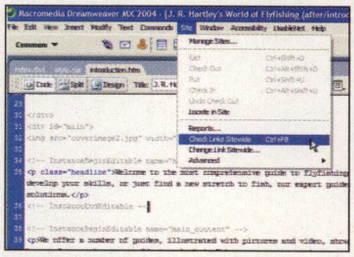
Don't rely on Dreamweaver's own renderer or assume that your CSS trick is going to work the same in every browser. This kind of ongoing testing makes it easier to catch typos, browser bugs and bad code at the moment they appear. It's always much easier to correct things when they're fresh than to go back a few hours later and have to remember what's supposed to be happening.

"PRETEND THAT YOU'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR SITE BEFORE, AND SEE HOW IT FITS TOGETHER. SET YOURSELF TASKS, THEN WORK OUT HOW EASY IT IS TO FULFILL THEM"

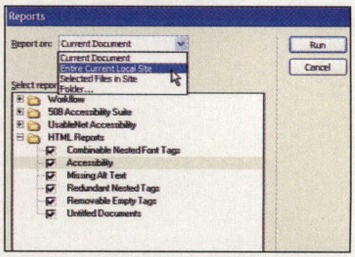
Some time for testing though, ought to be reserved for when you step back from a site and consider it done. In the trade this is known as quality assurance, or 'QA'. But it can also mean 'questions and answers', since the way to approach it is, in essence, to ask questions of your site and see if it comes up with the goods.

For some aspects of this, you can save time by relying on your site-building software. Run a site-wide link check with Dreamweaver to make sure everything links up, then run a report with all the HTML Report boxes checked, to seek out missing ALTs, empty tags and other crud. Expand your browser testing to include older versions – start with Dreamweaver's Target Browser features. And don't forget about different platforms. If you don't have access to a Mac, find an Apple-owning friend to look at the site on a selection of its browsers.

The most important bits of QA though, require time and effort and a certain amount of role-play. While uploading your site, develop amnesia. That is, pretend you've never seen it before, and see how it fits together. Set yourself tasks by starting with a 'How do I...?' question, recalling the personas you used in doing the original design, then work out how easy it is to fulfil them. Ask yourself questions as you click around: 'Does the navigation make sense?' 'How do I get back to the beginning?' Slow down your train of thought, and you'll find the process of thinking about what you're doing is invaluable in fine-tuning any rough edges that remain.

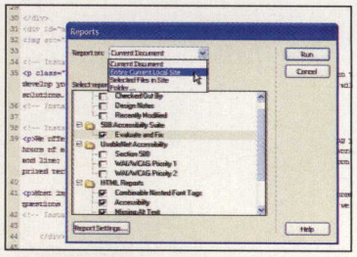


Checking the links throughout your site is vital for the health and well-being of your pages



Checking for accessibility is a must – although you should have designed with this in mind

It's important to keep things in perspective here. A site built in a day is never going to be as polished as one that's taken weeks of careful planning. But with the right approach, there's no reason why a speedily built site should be a shoddy one. You should be able to walk (or stagger!) away from your new creation with more than a little pride in what you've accomplished in just 24 hours. ■

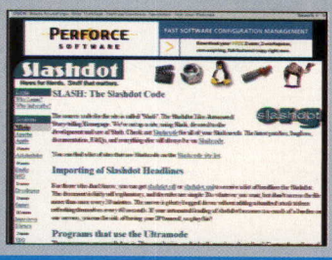


Dreamweaver has loads of reporting functions that will tell you what's wrong with your site

HOW DO I BUILD...?

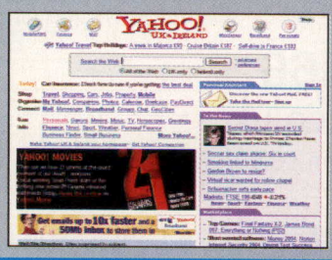
1. Slashdot (www.slashdot.org)

"You must be kidding!" we hear you say. True, Slashdot is a Web behemoth, with its ability to send linked servers crashing within seconds of a story going live. But the open-source mavens behind the site stuck to their principles and made the site code available for download. Go to **www.slashcode.com**, click on 'Current Slash', and follow the instructions to configure your server. With a minimum of effort, you'll have your own Slash-a-like within minutes. We can't guarantee the million members, though.



2. Yahoo UK (uk.yahoo.com)

Now we're getting silly – or are we? Yahoo, like most portal sites, is actually a patchwork of material from other sources. While you can't hope to replicate the search engine or the Webmail server, it's easy to build a private portal in hours. Locate the RSS feeds for your favourite sources, and use a Web-based service such as Jawfish (**www.mouken.com/rss/jawfish/**) to turn them into JavaScript includes. Use a service like BlogRolling (**www.blogrolling.com**) to maintain your links in similar fashion. No ads, no sponsored links, just lots of content with no further effort required.



3. BBCi (www.bbc.co.uk)

Here's the big test: the BBC's site is backed by millions in licence fee money, employs dozens of writers, designers, coders and techies to keep it running, and spends up to a year at a time honing its interface through in-depth user testing. Can you match all that in a day? Put simply – not a chance. But you can benefit from all that time and effort by looking at how the different approaches across the site, for instance the colourful, image-driven front page for CBeebies (**www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies**), are built with a particular user base in mind.

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The original "Web-in-a-box" solution.
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Industry standard for web hosting.
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Your servers safe in our Data Centre.
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step two: Select Specification

Our team understands the flexibility required to meet the needs of every mission critical hosted solution. Versatility is offered across a broad range:

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Server processing power ranges from 450Mhz to 3Ghz speeds.

Memory
RAM memory from 128MB to a massive 4GB available.

Storage
Hard drive storage space up to 4x 200GB.

Data Transfer
Monthly data transfer rates (bandwidth) from 15GB to 1200GB!

step three: Select Security

We offer several additional options to complement and further ensure that your hosted solution is always running 24x7.

Firewall
Protect your machine from unwanted visitors.

Backup
Vital if you are running databases and holding customer information.

Advanced Systems Monitoring
Ultimate Tool for knowing how your server is operating.

Plus Package
Firewall, Backup and Advanced Systems Monitoring bundled.

Systems Management
Let us keep your systems running for you 24x7.

Technical Support
We offer **FREE** and **UNLIMITED** technical support and after sales customer care 24x7x365 by phone and E-mail. Most other providers will charge you a hidden support cost.

Service Level Agreement
Two levels of SLAs are offered. Both are backed by satisfaction guarantee or your money back. No other dedicated host provider is as committed to you as us.

Same Day Setup
We understand the urgency of putting mission critical solutions online at short notice. Call and order before 4pm (Mon-Fri) and your solution will be up and running the same day!

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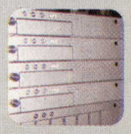
Your hosted solution will reside in our UK data centres owned and operated by us. Our fully featured and class leading data centres are situated in London and Nottingham.

Customer Charter
We are committed to providing you with the highest standards of service, quality products, security and privacy, and most importantly, performance.

Dedicated Servers

Our Data Centres. Your peace of mind.



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Designing a site isn't always just about putting it together. We look at the threats your pages could face on the Web and examine what you can do to keep them at bay

PROTECT

WORDS: MARK BILLEN

Sending your sparkling new all-singing, all-dancing site onto the Web is like sending your child to school for the first time. On the one hand there's the immense feeling of pride at seeing something you've nurtured and 'raised' take their first tentative steps into the world, while on the other you're worried about how they'll fare. The modern day Internet can be as volatile as the harshest playground, and the survival of the fittest sites doesn't always hinge on how popular they are, or even how clever. Around every corner lurk potential threats only too eager to damage vulnerable domains or exploit them for their own needs.

However, unlike most bullies, the hackers or 'script kiddies' behind the most famous attacks really get their kicks from targeting the big boys. We regularly hear reports about major URLs such as Microsoft and eBay being exposed to vandalism or some kind of server intrusion. On another level, a number of more obvious hazards should have the general HTML author reaching for the panic button. Site content or code theft is a very real possibility, and anyone keen to maintain control over the distribution of their often valuable efforts should take note. In fact, if you're serious about stopping any Tom, Dick or Harry coming along and nabbing your hard work, you need to start taking preventitive measures right now.

PUTTING A STOP TO STEALING

It should be remembered that not every type of 'attack' or threat revolves around technical brilliance or wizardry. The more serious stuff that hackers get up to can seem utterly bewildering to most of us, but there are plenty of things the average user can do to exploit your online wares.

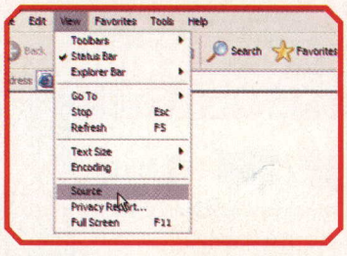
Perhaps the most predictable and prevalent problem is that of content theft, particularly images. All of us at some point have been guilty of trawling through the Web on the lookout for that certain picture, or have at least stumbled upon those that take our fancy. Ironically, most of the major search engines now provide dedicated image retrieval tools, which makes nabbing that exclusive photo or background a mere click away. What's more, the fundamental, albeit useful way in which browsers let you view and access graphics, is responsible for enabling downloads whether they are permitted or not. Most users know that right-clicking an <img> or link element within a page will display a context menu full of handy commands. The main culprits here are the cheeky Save Target As and specifically the Save Picture As options, which enable the rapid receipt of the file itself.

It's then up to whoever possesses it as to what they use it for, and if the material holds a copyright or some type of value, this can be a worry. Something that developers often do to prohibit this is to actually disable the context menu completely, using JavaScript. The necessary code can easily be picked up from free code libraries such as **www.javascript.com**, but the example listing provided below is a typical method you could place within the <body> tags:

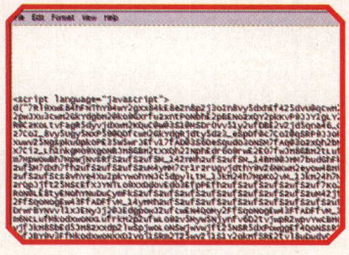
```
<script>
<!—

var msg="";

function clickIE() {
if (document.all) {
(msg);
return false;
}
}

function clickNS(e) {
if
(document.layers||(document.getElementB
yId&&!document.all)) {
if (e.which==2||e.which==3) {
(msg);
return false;
}
}
}

if (document.layers) {
document.captureEvents(Event.MOUSED
OWN);
document.onmousedown=clickNS;
}
else {
document.onmouseup=clickNS;
document.oncontextmenu=clickIE;
}

document.oncontextmenu=new
Function("return false");
// —>
</script>
```

WHAT'S THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN?

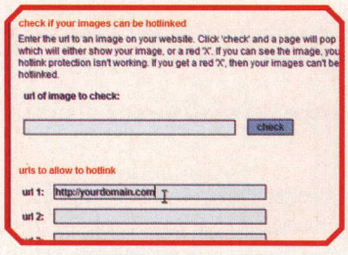
One of the most surprising things you can learn from publicised Web attacks is just how open everybody is to the threat. An incredible example is the politically motivated case in December last year, when 13 of NASA's own sites were hijacked. Angered by the recent war in Iraq, a gang of Brazilian hackers known as 'drwxr' managed to break in and post slogans against the US government. Index pages were replaced with the cheeky claim 'drwxr ownz nasa' and the phrase 'The war in iraq, kill is a play!' which when clicked played an audio clip of American soldiers. It was revealed at the time that the sites had been running on an outdated 1.3.27 version of the Apache Web server, on a Linux system, along with PHP and several other Apache modules. The theory behind the attack was that the culprits had remotely exploited a flaw in a PHP script to gain the root privileges necessary to alter the page content.



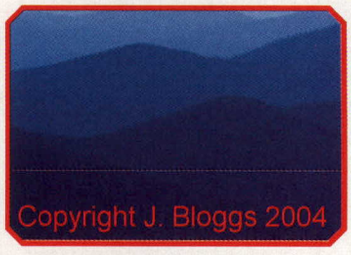
■ Anyone can take a look at how your sites are put together with the View Source option



■ Encoding or encrypting your page's HTML code is one way of preventing it being taken


check if your images can be hotlinked
Enter the url to an image on your website. Click 'check' and a page will pop
which will either show your image, or a red 'X'. If you can see the image, you
hotlink protection isn't working. If you get a red 'X', then your images can't be
hotlinked.
url of image to check:
check
urls to allow to hotlink
url 1: http://yourdomain.com
url 2:

■ Code generators, eg at **htmlbasix.com**, can help you in the fight against hotlinking



■ Adding a visible or digital watermark can help identify your images if they are stolen

"YOU CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT USERS WON'T BE ABLE TO EXTRACT WHAT THEY WANT WITH A SWIFT SCREEN GRAB"

YOUR SITE

A major problem with this method is that it can frustrate those users who innocently expect to be able to use the browser in the normal way. A range of very valuable clipboard options are also lost in the process, and although many are still accessible from the main menu, this isn't ideal.

A possible compromise is to encase an image object behind another to push it into the background. This HTML 'wrapper' approach involves setting the main graphic as a table cell background before inserting another image object on top. The second is exactly the same size and with a similar name, but totally transparent and ultimately useless. Visitors will still be able download this and think they have the right file, but in fact won't. An advantage here is that the context menu needn't be sacrificed at all, and you can be quite selective over what people can take. However, both methods can only ever be relied upon as basic deterrents, because it won't stop anyone who's capable of rifling through their browser cache or disabling JavaScript support. This means that total image file protection is virtually impossible to achieve, unless you make the transition to largely Flash-based design. The context menu is lost here by default, and content is encapsulated in the movie component instead of the actual files. Unfortunately, you'll never be able to guarantee that users won't be able to extract what they want from a swift screen grab.

WATERMARKING

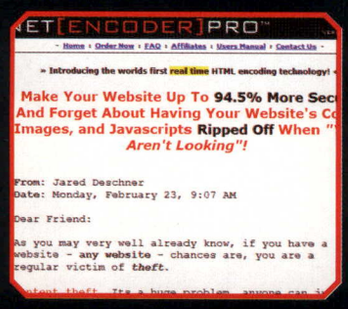
Something you might like to consider as an alternative to theft prevention is making sure stolen material is traceable. It's possible to give all your files, not least the images, a digital watermark that can carry all the details of where each one is from and who created it. This type of 'signature' can be quite effective, as it isn't regularly visible but will remain evident even if the image is subsequently edited or altered. Photoshop has instructions about how this can be done quite simply, but registration with the Digimark Corporation is necessary to obtain a unique identity. Your contact details will be kept on a database and referenced by the creatorID when you need to be notified of any infringement.

Similarly, you could try adding a far more obvious and obtrusive banner over an image that would render it useless to anyone else. This is most effective when providing a preview of a commercial

■ The browser's built-in commands for downloading images make it easy for them to be grabbed

SOFTWARE RESOURCES

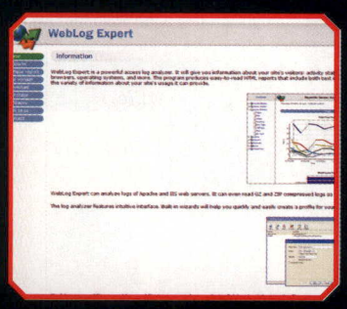
Four different programs that offer a variety of clever methods for taking care of your site


NET ENCODER PRO
Home · Order Now · FAQ · Affiliates · Users Manual · Contact Us
» Introducing the worlds first real time HTML encoding technology! «
Make Your Website Up To 94.5% More Sec
And Forget About Having Your Website's C
Images, and Javascripts Ripped Off When "
Aren't Looking"!
From: Jared Deschner
Date: Monday, February 23, 9:07 AM
Dear Friend:
As you may very well already know, if you have a website - any website - chances are, you are a regular victim of theft.

NET ENCODER PRO 2.75

www.netencoder.com

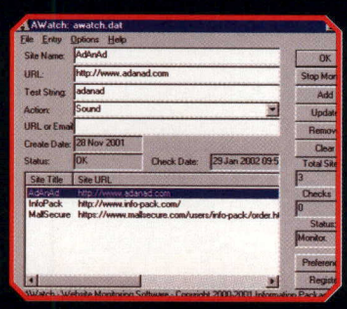
This security suite is easy to use and install. It sits next to your Web site and can be fully configured to offer all the protection you'll need; not only will it encode all source code files but will also prevent page printing, clipboard commands, image file theft and even screen grabbing.



WEBLOG EXPERT LITE

www.weblogexpert.com

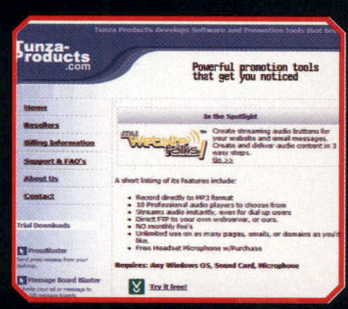
Useful for gauging site accessibility and usability, this piece of software could also be used to keep a close eye on the health of your domain. Graphical reports can be produced to let you know what all your visitors have been up to, as well as which files have recently been accessed.



ATOMIC WATCH 1.03

www.info-pack.com/awatch

Minimising the potential downtime of your Web site is what Atomic Watch is all about. The program will maintain a constant vigil over your URL and quietly wait for anything out of the ordinary to occur. Any errors are then swiftly announced by an audio alarm or email.



LINKLOCK – PAYPAL BUTTON ENCRYPTER 1.0

www.tunza-products.com

Various apps are available to lock up certain page elements you may use, especially those relating to eCommerce. PayPal trading is serious stuff, and this handy program stops thieves from bypassing your online ordering system by encrypting the buttons in minutes.

graphic that needs only to be functional, and could range from a large diagonal text marquee to a subdued note of copyright.

HOTLINKING

One of the silliest and most irritating phenomena on the Web is that of 'Hotlinking', which is again normally associated with the borrowing of images. This concept allows would-be thieves to 'take' your resources simply by linking to them remotely – and you've got to pay the bandwidth charge as well. For example, rather than downloading an image file using the methods we've highlighted, a culprit will simply reference the file on the owner's server and load it into their page that way.

"DO YOUR BEST TO MAKE THE CODE YOU WRITE AS HARD TO DECIPHER IN ITS NORMAL STATE AS POSSIBLE"

From a design point of view this is not only a reckless and lazy way of doing things, but it's also considered highly immoral. The victim's often exclusive images are being used by someone else, and their own bandwidth is being exploited to do it. The situation is worsened by the fact that there aren't many reliable solutions which will prevent it, apart from regularly changing your site's directory structure. Many cautious administrators will periodically change the filenames of embedded graphics just to thwart hotlinkers, but even altering folder paths is a faster way to get the same result. This will effectively sever any unwanted references, although you might consider supplying a substitute file that warns any known offenders to desist.

Alternatively, a more practical and thorough approach is to add a code file to the root of your site named '.htaccess' which dictates the URLs that have access to the resources. A number of online tools such as the one at **www.htmlbasix.com** will produce this code for you and guide you on implementation, but your server must support mod_rewrite for it to work.

CONTROLLING CODE

Keeping your page's precious and possibly unique markup under wraps can itself be something to consider. As with images, it doesn't take much for any keen visitor to gain access to the raw code behind your pages and simply copy it into their own sites. Selecting the Source option under IE's View menu is all it takes to instantly open Notepad and potentially steal some innovative HTML solutions.

Again, this is a tough threat to overcome, but there are still a few basic techniques that can be used to make your code harder to get at. An obvious trick is to make sure that any scripts or CSS classes don't reside within the page itself. This is good practice anyway, and the use of external .js or .css files will prevent the source from being viewed directly.

Similarly, the problem with this is that the files can again be archived from the cache, although encrypting these listings can combat this too. Several programs are available online that will facilitate this, and many will even allow you to scramble the HTML as well. Alternatively, you could do your best to make all the code you write as hard to decipher in its normal state as possible. Frustrate potential thieves by removing formatting such as spaces and line breaks from the page code you publish. The page will continue to load and display correctly as long as you make sure no tags are accidentally removed, while keeping a formatted backup is sensible for your own future work.

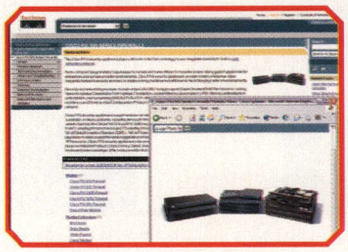
SERVER YOU RIGHT

Without doubt the most important defence mechanism any cautious developer will want for their site is server-side security. Most commonly this refers to the implementation of a firewall, and if you choose to have your pages hosted commercially, this should be something you expect from the service as standard.

A firewall will basically oversee the access between your domain and the Internet, controlling any incoming traffic to the host server. It will also look to prevent unauthorised logins or plug the holes that hackers may use to infiltrate the system and obtain sensitive data.

The firewall will form the main barrier against hijacks or vandalism, where well-known examples have seen pages shut down and even defaced. The perpetrators scan for loopholes in server security to mount attacks, and a decent firewall will be able to log this behaviour when it happens. Suspicious activity or outside requests from the Web will also be able to be traced and then reported back for future alerts.

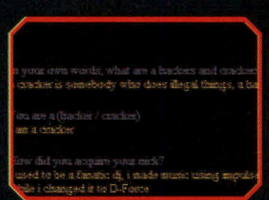
The only real threats a firewall can be vulnerable to are those that exist beyond its remit. The Internet is made up of many interconnected servers and networks, so a protected system could still be taken offline by downing another system earlier in the chain. This also makes a 'denial of service' an almost unavoidable possibility, when someone attempts to render your firewall inoperable by crashing or flooding it. Sites that rely on providing a time-based service can particularly suffer here, although every site administrator should be aware of all the risks before going live. ■



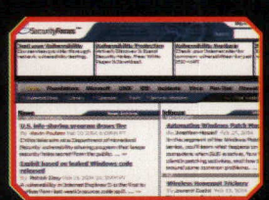
■ Cisco Systems' site at **www.ciscostystems.com** offers a whole world of firewall solutions

HACKING IT

The stereotype of the average hacker has probably always been the aloof loner who doesn't venture any further than their darkened bedroom. However, movies such as *The Matrix* have seen Hollywood give these technological rebels a more heroic and even 'cool' image that often belies the damage they cause. Perhaps a more genuine angle on what makes these guys tick can be found on the many anonymous and underground forums, including those such as **www.safemode.org**. Here you'll find transcripts of brief interviews with a number of established hacking and cracking groups that might go some way to altering any preconceived perceptions. Although most spend much of their time deliberately defacing pages, they do it from little more than an academic perspective. Many purposefully ignore valuable data and simply post messages that alert system administrators to potentially critical security holes. Several have gone on to willingly advise the victims on how to patch the problems, winning hosting offers and even job offers from grateful companies.



■ What the hackers have to say about themselves isn't always what you'd expect



■ **Securityfocus.com** is a favourite site in cracking circles, giving valuable technical advice

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■ Designers in search of a firewall to protect their site should visit ZoneLabs (**www.zonelabs.com**)

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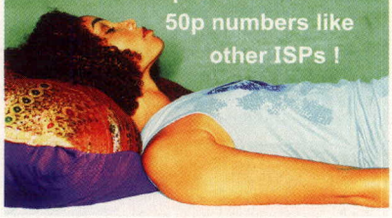

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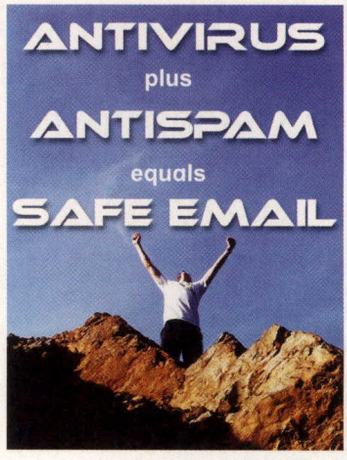

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THE TADO TEAM SHOW YOU THE SECRETS OF THEIR WACKY CREATIONS, AND TEACH YOU HOW TO DO IT YOURSELF

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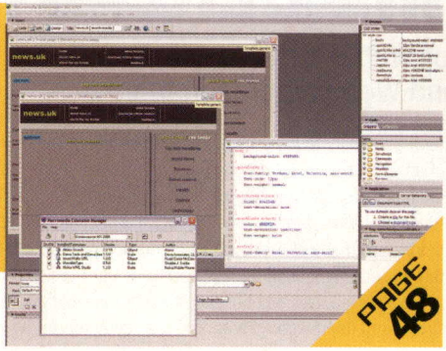
DREAMWEAVER



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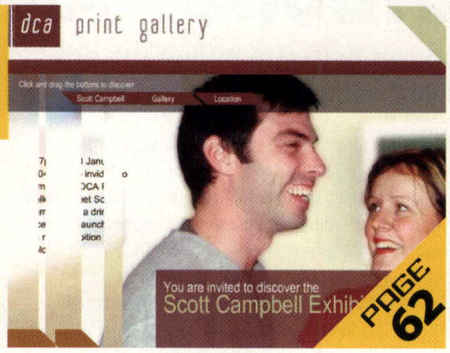
FLASH



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TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE A NAVIGATION BAR IN PHOTOSHOP AND IMAGEREADY

THE EXPERT: TODD YARD

Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, Todd first started using Flash when he moved to New York City (via an acting course in London). He now works for Daedalus Media (**www.daedalusmedia.com**) in New York, and is also lead Flash programmer at ego 7 (**www.ego7.com**). Todd is a regular contributor to the *Friends of Ed* series of books, and specialises in Flash, Illustrator and Photoshop.

Words
Each word in the navigation lies within a separate slice so that the image may be swapped

Layer styles
Layer styles were incorporated to show the states of the navigation buttons

Background
The background for the page consists of a masked and filtered photograph, a posterized gradient and vector shapes

LydianPortfolio.psd @ 100% (This is the home message. This, RGB/8)
Lydian DeVere
home • about • portfolio • contact
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.

States
States for Over, Down and Selected (among others) may be set in ImageReady

Content
Content for the message is within another remote slice that is toggled on by the buttons

Layout
The layout for this portfolio site was prepared in Photoshop

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Build a Web navigation bar in Photoshop and ImageReady

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
Two hours

ON THE DISC
Photoshop/Tutorial files: files [folder], finished page [folder]

CREATE A NAVIGATION BAR IN PHOTOSHOP AND IMAGEREADY

Photoshop can help streamline the production of Web interfaces with its powerful combination of image manipulation and Web preparation tools

More than an app to create and manipulate images, Photoshop has grown into a robust tool that, with its sister app, ImageReady, can build a fully functioning Web page from the graphics up. Although designers have been taking advantage of Photoshop's Web preparation abilities since version 5.5, the newest incarnation makes the process even easier, from the Slice tools and Save for Web dialog in Photoshop to the Animation and Web Content palettes in ImageReady. The two work hand in hand, and the ability to jump back and forth between them with the push of a button makes for an even more streamlined process.

If you build your graphic Web content in Photoshop, you'll find the ImageReady interface familiar and the logic consistent, with Layers, History, Info and many of the standard Photoshop palettes appearing.

In this tutorial, we'll build a simple portfolio site from start to finish, preparing graphics and building the interface in Photoshop, then jumping to ImageReady to get the site ready for the Web. ■

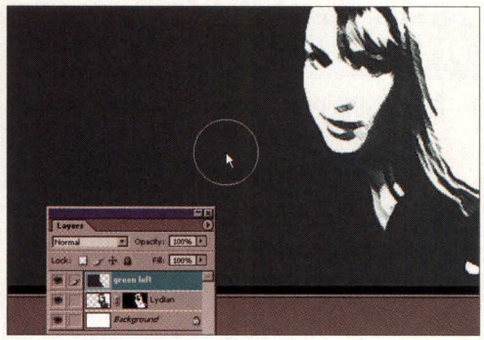
TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE A NAVIGATION BAR IN PHOTOSHOP AND IMAGEREADY

1 WELCOME TO LYDIAN

Create a 1000x600 pixel 72dpi image with a white background. Save it as 'LydianPortfolio.psd'; open Lydian.tif and drag the image into the Portfolio file. Place it at the right of the canvas and name the layer 'Lydian'. In the Channels palette, duplicate the red channel and name it 'Lydian Mask'.

2 FLIP THE CHANNEL

With the Lydian Mask channel selected, run Image>Adjustments>Levels, and set the Input Level shadow field (the first field) to 80 to increase the black in the channel. Click OK, then use Image>Adjustments>Invert to invert the channel so that the head becomes white.

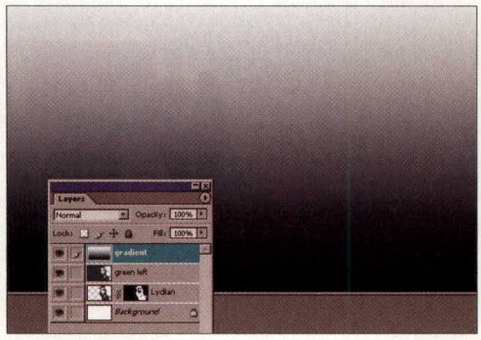


3 NOW FACE LEFT

Load the Lydian mask as a selection and use it to add a layer mask to the Lydian layer. Next, create a new layer above Lydian and name it 'Green Left'. Sample the main blue-green colour from the image and use a large brush to colour in everything to the left of the face.

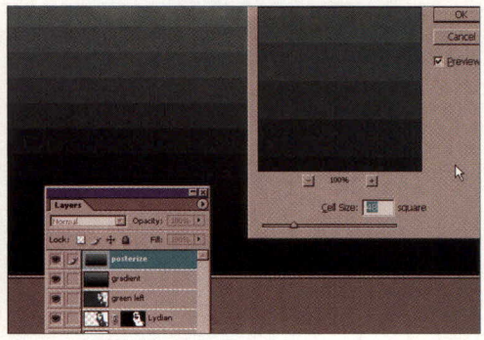
4 HOME ON THE COLOR RANGE

The colours won't be consistent, so with the Green Left layer selected, use Select>Color Range and Sampled Colors with the Fuzziness slider set to 200. Sample the same blue-green and click OK. With the new selection, use Edit>Fill to fill the area with the colour.



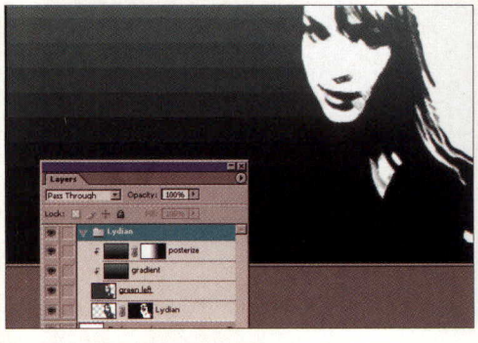
5 MAKING THE GRADIENT

Use Filter>Blur>Guassian Blur with a 1.4-pixel setting on the Green Left layer as well as the Lydian layer mask to soften the edges a bit. Next, create a new layer called 'Gradient' and draw a linear white-to-black gradient from the top of the image to the bottom.



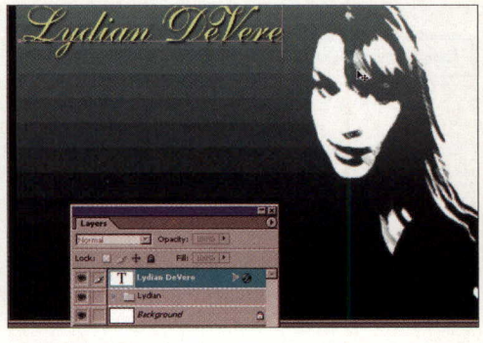
6 MOSAIC POSTER

Create a new layer below the gradient and fill it with blue-green. Set the Gradient layer blending mode to Overlay then merge the gradient with the solid colour layer. Rename this 'Gradient', then duplicate it, naming the dupe 'Posterize'. On Posterize, run Filter>Pixelate>Mosaic with a cell size of 48.



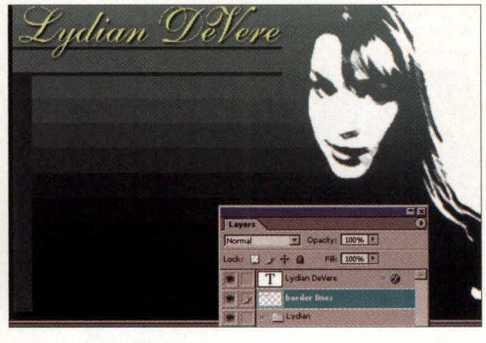
7 MASKING THE BANDS

Group Gradient and Posterize with Green Left. Select the Posterize layer and add a layer mask. With the mask selected, draw a white-to-black gradient so the colour bands don't run across Lydian's face. Go ahead and link all layers but the background, and create a new layer set named 'Lydian'.



8 TITLE SCRIPT

Select a script font (such as English Vivace) and a bright yellow colour. Type in 'Lydian DeVere' for the portfolio name and place it at the top left. Use the Free Transform tool to resize it to cover more area, then add a Drop Shadow layer style to make it stand out.



9 GET IN LINE

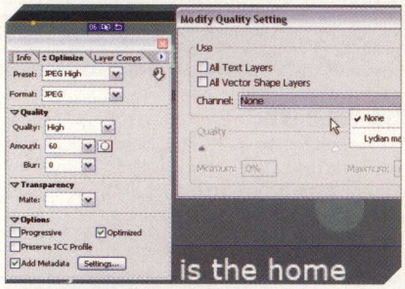
Sample a dark green from the image (#273832) and use it to make an underline beneath the title, either by drawing a shape or filling a rectangular marquee. Draw another line below that to serve as the bottom border of the navigation bar, and a third line down the left.

TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE A NAVIGATION BAR IN PHOTOSHOP AND IMAGEREADY

TECHNIQUE

OPTIMISING IN IMAGEREADY

In Photoshop, optimisation for the Web all takes place in the Save For Web dialog. In ImageReady, the Optimize palette holds the same tools and options and more, but because it's a non-modal palette, it can be accessed and altered at any time for individual slices.

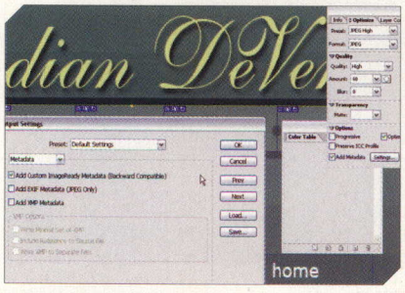


1 COMPRESSING AS JPEG

Select a slice using the Slice Select tool and open the Optimize palette. Pick a preset from the drop-down, and the palette options change to match. For a JPEG, you can control quality and blur, and use an alpha channel to control the compression amount.

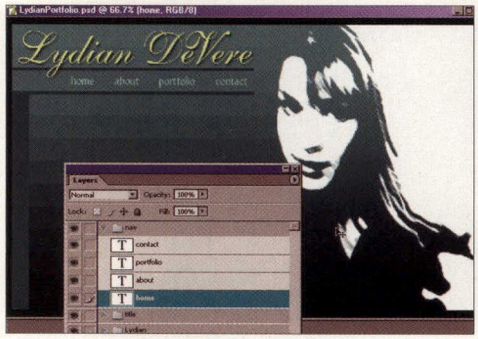
2 SAVING AS GIF

For a GIF, one of the most useful controls is the number of colours. Using the drop-down menu with the Color Table palette, you can limit the colours and reduce the filesize of an image. The Optimize palette also offers control of dithering and transparency.



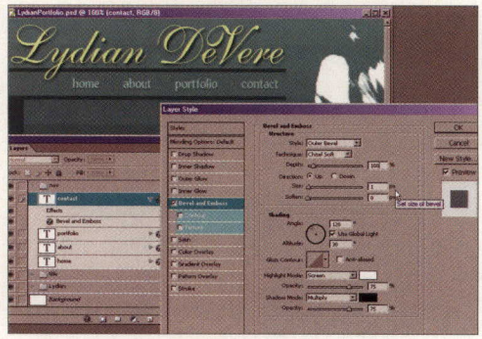
3 OUTPUT SETTINGS

The Output Settings dialog, accessed via the File menu or the Settings button in the Optimize palette, has many options for how the HTML will be written when the file's saved, eg formatting, naming conventions, file structure and meta data settings.



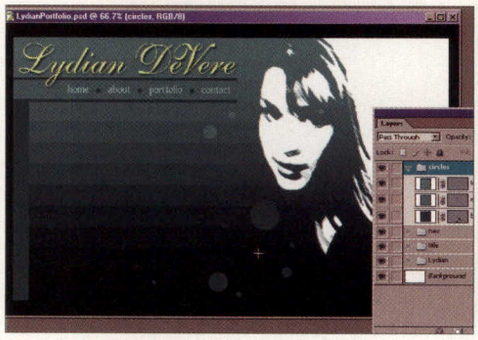
10 NOW FOR NAVIGATION

With a light green (#8EC7B5) and small, legible font, create four new Type layers with the text 'Home', 'About', 'Portfolio' and 'Contact'. Line these up below the title between the two horizontal lines drawn in the previous step. Place them in a new set named 'nav'.



11 WHAT THE BEVEL!

Select one of these new text navigation layers and give it a Bevel and Emboss layer style with an Outer Bevel, Chisel Soft technique, 100% depth and a 1-pixel size. Copy this style from the one layer and apply to the other three navigation words layers.



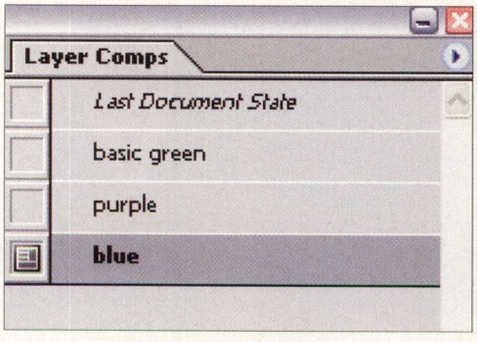
13 SEEING SPOTS

Sampling other greens from the image, draw several more circles of varying sizes to the left of the face. Colours higher in the gradient bands should be lighter than the circles at the lower bands, so that the contrast is subtle. Place all of these circles within their own set.

Lydian DeVere
home about portfolio contact
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.

14 ALL WORK AND NO PLAY...

Select the Horizontal Type tool and drag a box over the middle to lower left of the canvas. Make this text a white, sans serif font, such as Verdana, at 18 points. Fill this box with the repeated text 'This is the home message'. Rename this text layer 'Home Start'.



16 READY FOR IMAGEREADY?

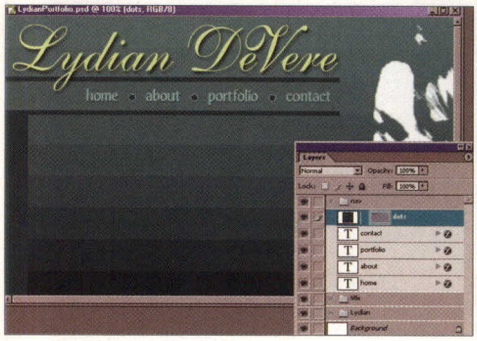
It's time to head to ImageReady, so save the file and click the Edit In... button at the bottom of the toolbox. Once in ImageReady, turn off the visibility of all the content text layers except for Home Start. The first step will be to slice up the page.

Lydian DeVere
home about portfolio contact
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.

17 GUIDING YOU THROUGH

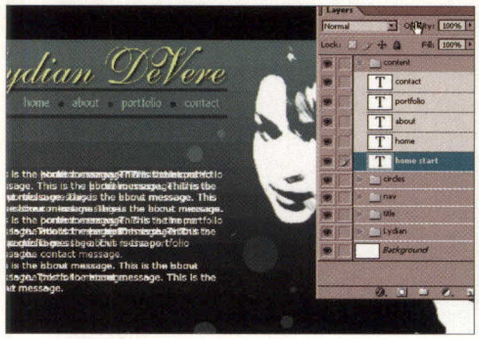
Make sure the Rulers are showing (View>Rulers), then drag a guide from the top ruler to just above the nav buttons and another just below. Drag two more horizontal guides for the top and bottom of the content text. Since these areas will contain swapped images, slices need to be defined.

CREATE A NAVIGATION BAR IN PHOTOSHOP AND IMAGEREADY



12 CONNECT THE DOTS

Sample the colour used for the lines drawn in step 9, then use the Ellipse tool to draw a small, perfect circle between each navigation word (three in total). Use the Add to Shape Area setting to draw them all on the same shape layer.



15 LAYERED TEXT

Duplicate the Home Start layer four times and name the dupes 'Home', 'About', 'Portfolio' and 'Contact'. Change the text for each to match the different nav section (eg 'This is the about message'). Both Home and Home Start will have the same message – the reason will become apparent.

IN DETAIL: LAYER COMPS FOR EXPERIMENTATION

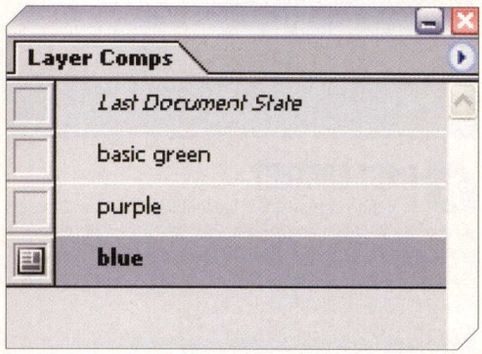
The addition of layer comps allows designers to freely experiment with variations on a page

Before the introduction of layer comps in Photoshop and ImageReady, experimentation with layout or effects required duplication and management of layers and/or documents. Now, designers can create multiple looks and layouts and save them all into a single palette, toggling through them easily and quickly. The process is simple and follows the logic of other palettes in the applications.

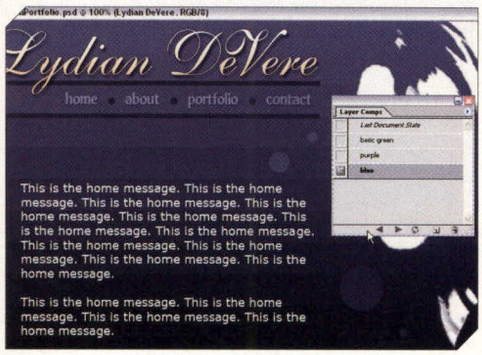
First create a new layer comp in the Layer Comps palette to save the current state of the document. Then feel free to move layers, add layers, toggle layers on or off, change blending modes and add or change the layer styles (but you can't transform or filter layers, as that will be permanently applied to the image).

In ImageReady, the extra consideration of where slices have been placed will limit the amount of moving that can be done to an image's layers, and layer styles for slice states can't be altered (this seems a bit unintuitive, and perhaps will be changed in a later version). However, instead of defining button states using layer styles, different states can be created using layers. Since changes to the style of a layer can be saved in a layer comp, this can be used to create different looks for interactivity in different comps.

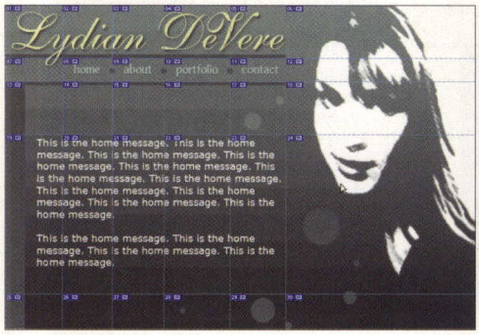
Once satisfied with a new layout, create a new layer comp in the Layer Comps palette. The multiple comps can now be viewed by clicking to the left of a comp's name in the palette or by using the Apply Previous and Apply Next Layer Comp buttons at the bottom of the palette. If changes are made to a comp, it'll need to be updated in the palette using the Update Layer Comp button. ■



■ Layer comps allow you to save different versions of the same image within one palette – ideal for people designing for clients


Lydian DeVere
home about portfolio contact
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.

■ With a simple mouse-click, you can quickly and easily switch between different versions, allowing you to see changes instantly


Lydian DeVere
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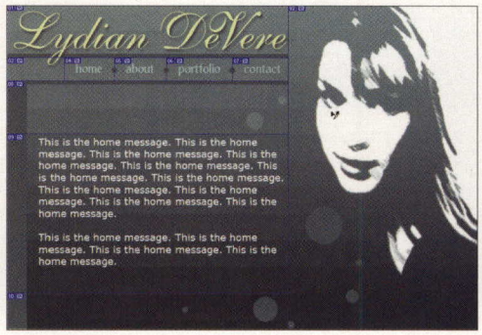
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.

18 SLICING IT UP

Drag five vertical guides from the left ruler so that each top nav word is within its own boxed-in area. The slices defined here will determine the Hit area for each button, so give enough space for each. Use Slices>Create Slices from Guides to turn the guides into slices.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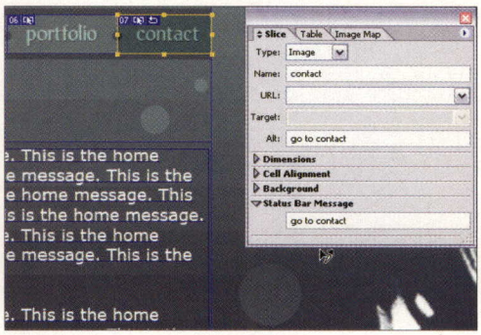
This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message. This is the home message.

19 A FAVOURABLE MERGER

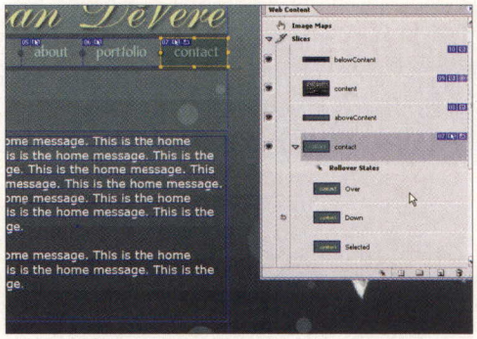
Use the Slice Select tool to Shift-select the slices on the right. Merge these with Slices>Combine Slices. Select all the slices on the upper left covering the title and merge these. Merge the slices directly below the nav words, then the slices containing the content, and finally the slices below the content.



20 STATUS, PLEASE

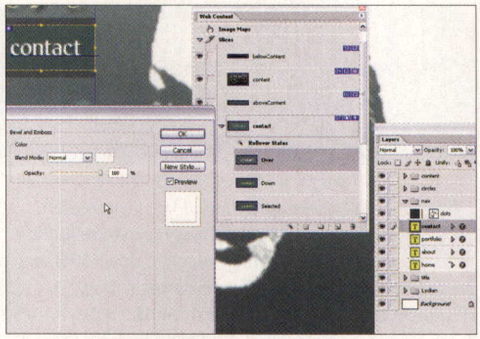
Use the Slice Select tool to select each slice and give it a descriptive name and perhaps some Alt text and Status Bar message for the navigation. You could use this palette to have a slice launch a new page using the URL field, although it won't be used for this tutorial.

TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE A NAVIGATION BAR IN PHOTOSHOP AND IMAGEREADY



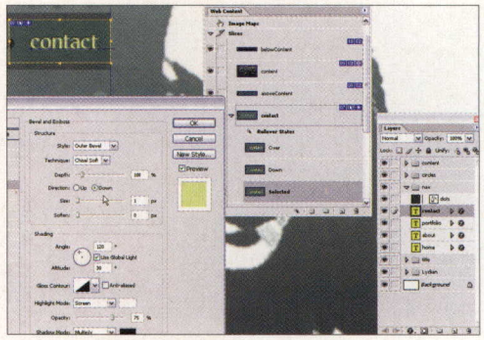
21 FIRST CONTACT

To define button states for contact, select the Contact slice in the Web Content palette. Use either the Palette menu or the right-click context menu to add a new rollover state. 'Over' will automatically be created. Create two more states for 'Down' and 'Selected'.



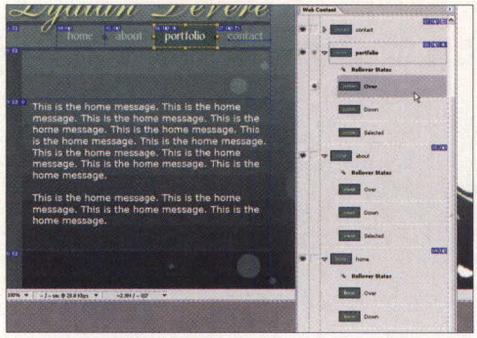
22 WHITER SHADE OF PALE

Select the Over state for the Contact slice in the Web Content palette. With a state selected, changes can be made to the appearance of the slice during that state. Open the Layer Effects for the Contact layer and give a white colour overlay in addition to the bevel and emboss.



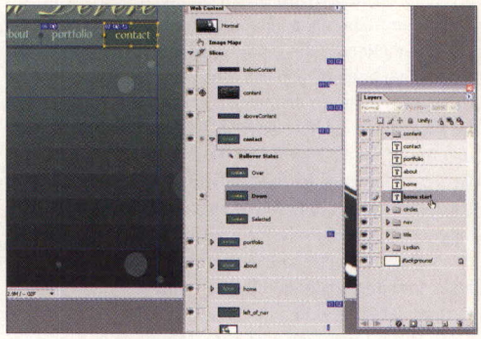
23 SIMPLY STATED

For both the Down and Selected states of Contact, set the bevel and emboss effect to Down instead of Up to make the text appear embedded. Also, give each a colour overlay of yellow to match the yellow of the title. Once complete, select the top Contact slice in the Web Content palette.



24 AND REPEAT

Repeat this process of adding three states to the remaining navigation slices, resetting the styles for each slice in each state as performed in the previous step. Make sure to deselect the states for each when complete, by clicking the original slice in the Web Content palette.

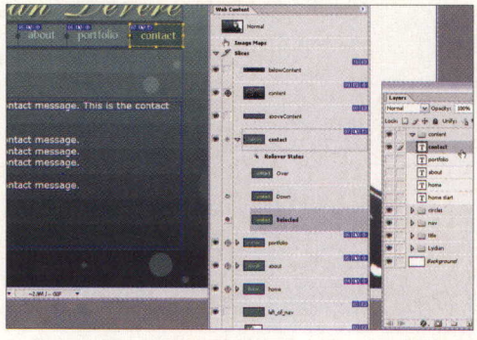


25 TURN IT OFF

To have the content switch when a button is pressed, the layer with the content text needs to be toggled on or off, based on the button state. For contact, select the Down state in the Web Content palette and turn off the visibility of the Home Start layer.

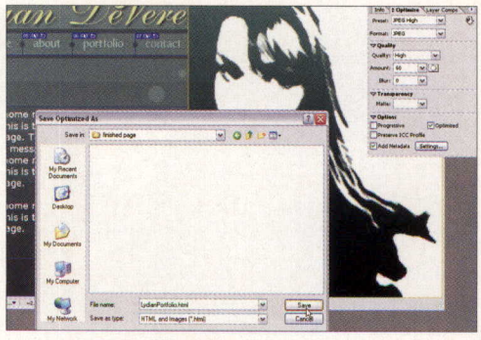
26 RIGHT ON TARGET

The Content slice needs to be defined as a remote slice to be affected by the contact state. Drag the small swirl icon at the left of the Down contact state in the Web Content palette to the Content slice on the canvas. A small target will appear on the Content slice.



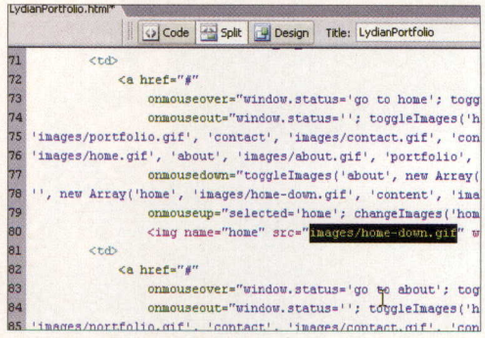
27 POINT OF CONTACT

For the contact Selected state, turn off the Home Start layer visibility and turn on the Contact Message layer visibility. Once more, drag the swirl icon in the Web Content palette to the Content slice on the canvas. Click the Contact slice to deselect all states.



28 EXPORT OF CALL

Repeat this process for the three other navigation buttons, then save the optimised file to create the HTML. (Use the Optimize palette to control export settings for each slice, and File>Output Settings for overall settings.)



29 HOME SWEET HOME

To automatically highlight 'Home' when opening the page, a small change needs to be made to the HTML. Open the HTML produced in the last step in an HTML or text editor, and find the line defining the SRC attribute for the Home image. Change it to the filename for the Home Down state.

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TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
WRAP TEXTURES AND TEXT IN PHOTOSHOP CS

THE EXPERT: TODD YARD

Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, Todd first started using Flash when he moved to New York City (via an acting course in London). He now works for Daedalus Media (**www.daedalusmedia.com**) in New York, and is also lead Flash programmer at ego 7 (**www.ego7.com**). Todd is a regular contributor to the *Friends of Ed* series of books, and specialises in Flash, Illustrator and Photoshop.

Lighting effects
Lighting effects using a special alpha channel were used to enhance the wrapped texture effect

Displace filter
The Displace filter was used to wrap the background image around the text graphics of the coin

Liquify filter
Finishing touches on the wrapped texture were performed using the Liquify filter

Reflected texture
The reflected texture was wrapped onto the top using a combination of the Shear filter and the Free Transform tool

Circular text
The new ability to set text on a path in Photoshop allowed for the circular text

Warp Text envelopes
The text was first distorted using the Warp Text envelopes with the Arc option selected

WRAP TEXTURES AND TEXT IN PHOTOSHOP CS

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Use Photoshop to wrap text and textures around image objects

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
One hour

ON THE DISC
Photoshop/ Tutorial files: Fleur_d_lis.psd, TopDesigns.psd & more

Wrap text and image elements around other objects in your composition using Photoshop

With all the power Photoshop provides for image manipulation, it's almost a shame to produce flat images with flat text. Sure, flatness has its place, but often an image features an object that begs to have textures and text wrapped about it. And Photoshop goes above and beyond to provide the designer with tools that allow for this task.

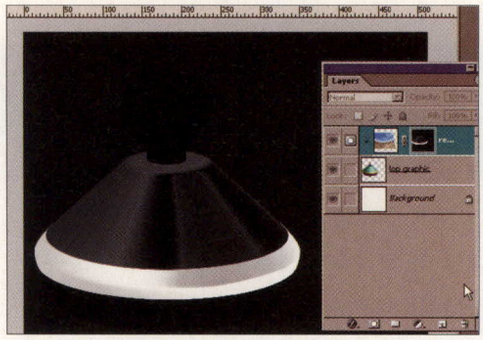
Obviously, for a bitmap image Photoshop has myriads of filters that can help wrap textures around objects (and this is considering only those included with the standard installation of Photoshop CS). These filters include Displace, Liquify, Spherize and Shear among others. In fact, the Free Transform functionality alone goes a long way when wrapping textures over flat surfaces.

For text, Photoshop 7 brought the designer the Warp Text options, which allow text to be distorted by envelopes. Photoshop CS finally offers the ability to set text on a path. Of course, once text has been rasterized, the designer can use any of the bitmap filters on the text as well.

In this tutorial we'll look at how to use these features to wrap text and textures in an image, exploring just one area of Photoshop's mighty power. ■

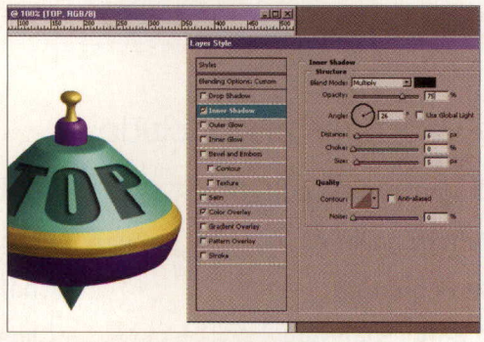
1 FROM THE TOP

Make a new RGB image file, 512x512 pixels at 72ppi with a white background. Save it as 'TopDesigns.psd'. Open top.png, which consists of an image created in Illustrator CS using the new 3D Revolve. Drag the top graphic into TopDesigns and set it on the left side of the image.



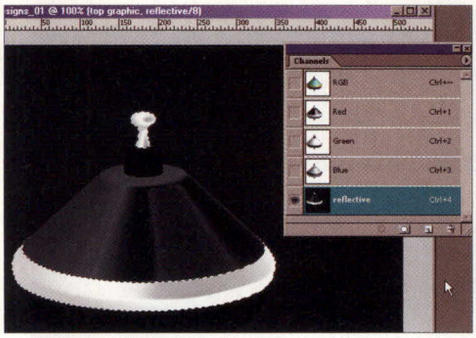
5 CHANGING THE CHANNEL

Load the Reflective channel as a selection and use this to apply a layer mask to the Reflection layer. Alt & click the layer mask to see it, then use black to paint over the top and bottom of the top, so they don't receive reflection. Click the layer thumbnail to return to the image.



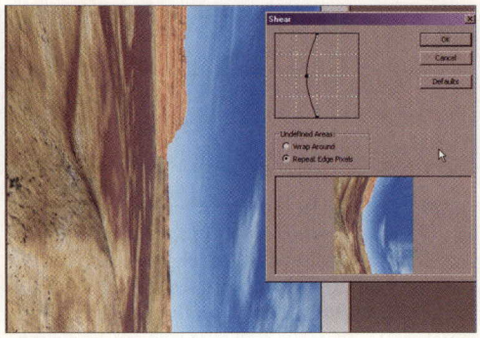
9 LAYERING WITH STYLE

In the Layer palette, set the TOP type layer's fill to 05, then open the Layer Style dialog by double-clicking the layer. Give it a black colour overlay set to multiply at 55%. Now add an inner shadow at 26° with a distance of 6 pixels and a size of 5 pixels.



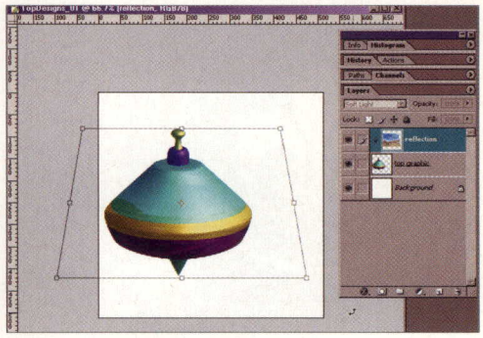
2 BEING REFLECTIVE

Let's define part of the top as a reflective surface for a texture. Use Select>Color Range; with Sampled Colors selected click on a midtone in the yellow of the top. Drag the Fuzziness slider to 200 and click OK. In the Channels palette, click Save Selection as Channel. Rename this alpha channel 'Reflective'.



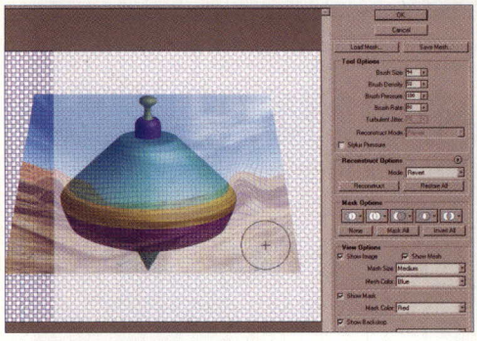
3 SHEAR JOY

Open reflection.bmp, a quick render done in Vue d'Sprit. This needs to be sheared for the top. Use Image> Rotate Canvas>90° CW, then Filter>Distort>Shear. With Repeat Edge Pixels selected, drag the middle control point of the shear line to the left by half a grid. Click OK.



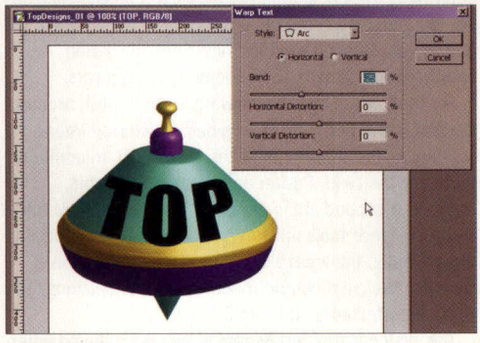
4 UPON REFLECTION

Rotate the Reflection image back 90° CCW, then drag it over to the TopDesigns image. Name it 'Reflection' and group it with the top graphic layer. Set the Reflection blending mode to Soft Light. Use Edit>Free Transform to scale and possibly skew the image to better fit the top.



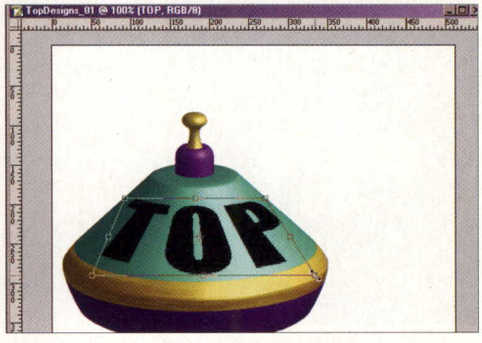
6 LIQUID REFLECTION

With the Reflection layer selected, open Filter>Liquify. Make sure that Show Backdrop is checked, then select the Forward Warp tool with a large brush size. Pull the reflection up around the edges of the top to better conform it to the top's shape. Click OK when satisfied.



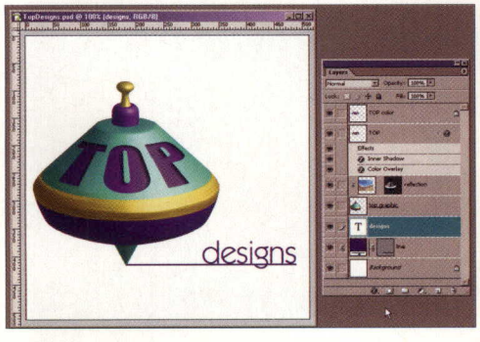
7 WARP SPEED AHEAD!

Select a fat font such as Impact, and with a black foreground colour, type 'TOP'. Resize the type so that it fills the top section of the top, then click on the Create Warped Text button in the Property bar. Select the Arc preset and set the bend to -25%. Click OK.



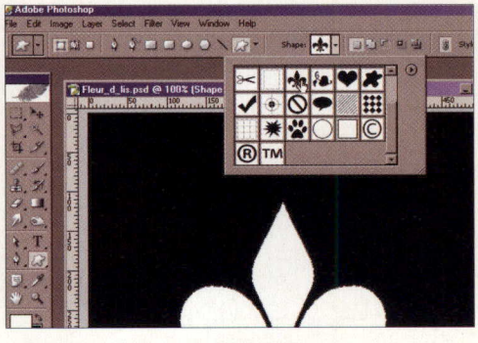
8 KEEPING IT IN PERSPECTIVE

Rasterize the Text layer (Layer>Rasterize>Type), then use Edit, Free Transform to transform the letters in perspective. Do this by dragging one of the lower corners while holding Control & Alt & Shift. Drag the lower corners out to better fit the letters on the top half of the top. Hit Enter to accept.



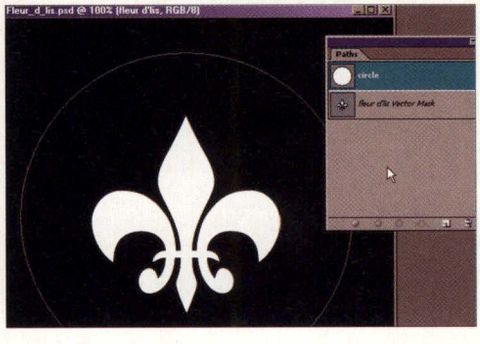
10 TOP THIS!

Duplicate the TOP layer and clear the duplicate's layer style. Sample a dark purple from the image and, with Lock Transparent Pixels selected, fill the duplicate letters with the colour. Set the Layer blending mode to 'Hue'. To, er, top it off, add a purple line and the word 'designs' below the top.



11 SOMETHING DIFFERENT...

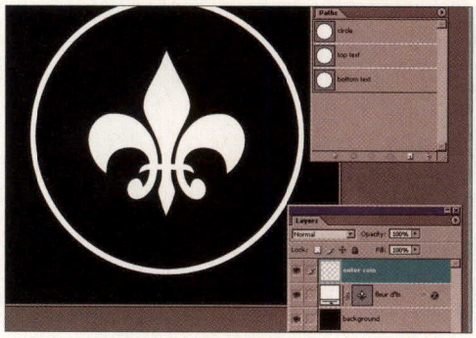
For something different, create an image of 512x512 pixels at 72ppi; save as 'Fleur_d_lis.psd'. Make the background black, and with a white foreground select the Custom Shape Tool and the Fleur_De_Lis shape from the drop-down in the Property bar. Draw the shape to fill the centre of the image.



12 TOTAL ELLIPSE

Use the Ellipse tool with the Paths option selected to draw a circular path on the stage. Hold Shift to make it a perfect circle and draw it large enough to more than cover the fleur d'lis. Double-click the work path name in the Paths palette and rename it 'Circle'.

WRAP TEXTURES AND TEXT IN PHOTOSHOP CS



13 DIFFERENT STROKES

Create a new layer named 'Outer Coin', then load the Circle path as a selection. Use Edit>Stroke to stroke the path inside with white, 8 pixels. Hit OK and deselect. In the Paths palette, duplicate the Circle path twice and rename the dupes 'Top Text' and 'Bottom Text'.

14 ON THE RIGHT PATH

Select and scale down the Top Text path. Choose a sans serif font, hover the Horizontal Type tool over the path and type 'change to'. Use the Direct Selection to reposition the type on the top of the path. Repeat the process for the other path using 'Fleur d'lis' and placing it at the bottom.

IN DETAIL: LIQUIFYING IMAGES

The Liquify filter provides a powerful interface for intricately manipulating an image

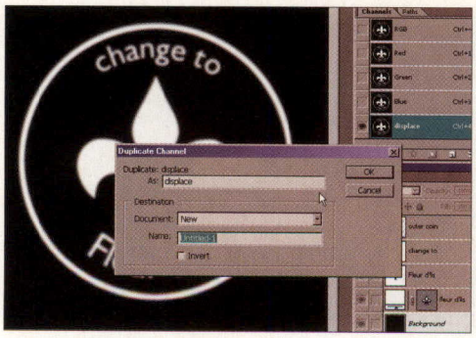
Found under the Filter menu, the Liquify dialog has an assortment of options and tools for warping an image. The left side of the interface holds the toolbox, while the right holds mini-palettes filled with settings. Under the standard OK and Cancel buttons there are options to load or save a mesh, which is a handy way to reapply settings from one session to another or from one layer to another. The Tool options lets you modify the settings for the current tool, and include a tool to reconstruct the image once you've liquified it. The Mask options offer ways to work with an existing mask in the image, while the View options determine what is seen in the preview. Especially useful are the Show Mesh option, which shows the underlying grid as you distort it, and the new Show Backdrop option, which allows you to see underlying layers.

For tools, you have the Forward Warp to push around the pixels and Reconstruct to repair a distorted image (as long as the window hasn't been closed). In addition, there are the Twirl, Pucker and Bloat tools to spin, contract or expand areas of pixels. The Push Left, Mirror and Turbulence tools offer even more control for specific tasks. Finally, the Freeze Mask and Thaw Mask tools allow for the creation and modification of selections that won't be affected by the Liquify tools.

This dialog is fun, but its real power is displayed when a subtle change needs to be performed, like a slight turn of a mouth or raise of an eyebrow, or as in this tutorial, the smooth wrapping of an image around another object. The Liquify filter allows delicate control over the pushing of pixels, saves time and provides fast solutions. ■

■ It might be branded as a 'fun' tool, but the liquify has many powerful functions to let you completely overhaul your images

■ On the other hand, the temptation to make someone look foolish, albeit in a very professional way, is often too much to resist



15 IT'S ALL A BLUR

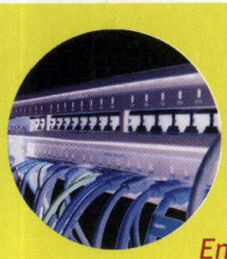
In the Channels palette, duplicate any of the channels and rename the dupe 'Displace'. Use Filter>Blur>Guassian Blur at 2 pixels on the channel, then duplicate the channel to a new Image file and save it as 'displace.psd'. Finally, turn off the visibility of all the layers.

16 DISPLACE IS NOT A HOME

Open up reflection.bmp, drag the image to the Fleur_d_lis file and crop it to fit. Use Image>Adjust> Hue/Saturation, and set Saturation to -75 and Lightness to +35. Run Filter>Distort>Displace with 10 for both scale options. Click OK and browse for the displace.psd.

17 LET THERE BE LIGHT

To accentuate the texture, create a new layer filled with 50% grey. Run Filter>Render>Lighting Effects on this with the displace channel loaded, then set the layer to Overlay. Use the Circle path to clip the Coin layer. Add finishing touches by blending the original Type layers and making a background.



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TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
LET USERS SEARCH YOUR SITE WITH ATOMZ EXPRESS SEARCH

THE EXPERT: NEIL WITHNALL

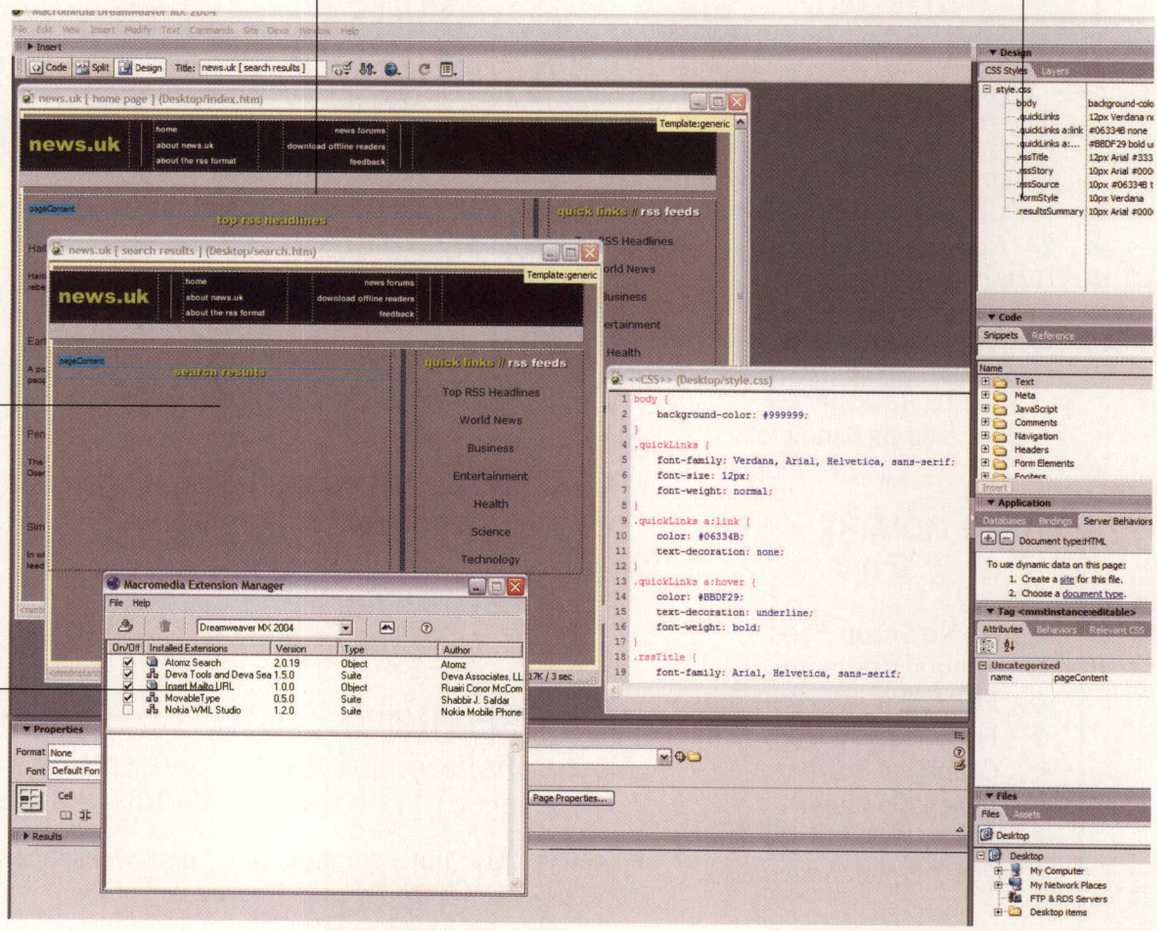
Neil is a freelance Web developer who has spent years learning the technical and practical aspects of Web design. He is equally at home working in Dreamweaver as he is with the latest hand-coding technologies. Check out what Neil's capable of by popping along to www.freelancenetwork.org.

Template facility
Use Dreamweaver's Template facility to quickly incorporate search forms in every page of your site

Cascading Style Sheets
Style form elements and search results text using Cascading Style Sheet classes

Search Results pages
Create your own customised Search Results pages using the Atomz template language and online editor

Atomz Search extension
Use the Atomz Search extension to automatically generate customised search forms pre-configured with your account details



THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create a site search facility using Atomz Express Search

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
45 minutes

ON THE DISC
Dreamweaver/ Tutorial files: assets [folder], tutorial [folder]

LET USERS SEARCH YOUR SITE WITH ATOMZ EXPRESS SEARCH

Use the Atomz Express Search system to help you design and implement your own fully customised keyword search engine

To help visitors get the most out of your site, a keyword search facility is an easy and convenient way for them to quickly find the info they want. It wasn't that long ago, though, that incorporating a search engine into a site meant either installing and maintaining an expensive applications server, or rolling up your sleeves and learning the finer points of CGI programming.

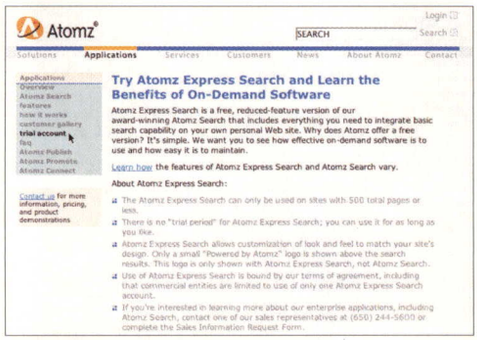
The advent of the Atomz Search system has, however, made this level of complexity a thing of the past. Instead of having to run your own search engines, you can take advantage of this dedicated online service to process search queries and return the results to your users.

As well as its powerful functionality, Atomz integrates with your site designs using customised search results templates. The system is highly optimised for the best possible performance, and is free to private and commercial users serving sites with fewer than 500 pages.

Our tutorial shows how you can quickly incorporate Atomz Express Search into sites, to give visitors exactly what they're looking for. ■

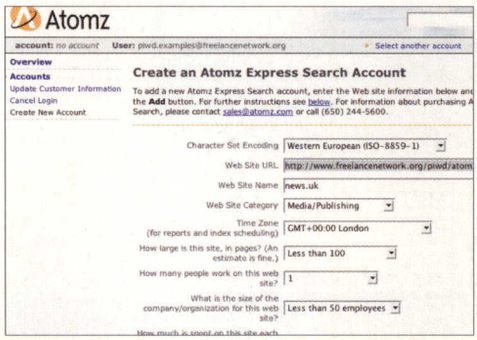
TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER

LET USERS SEARCH YOUR SITE WITH ATOMZ EXPRESS SEARCH



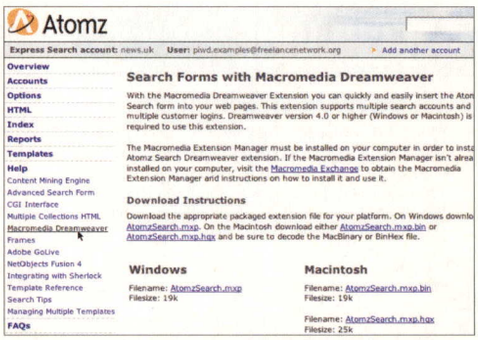
1 REGISTERING WITH ATOMZ

The first step to incorporating Atomz Express Search into your site is to visit **www.atomz.com/applications/search/trial.htm** and complete the registration form. At this stage all you need do is enter your email address to receive a login password and instructions on setting up the account.



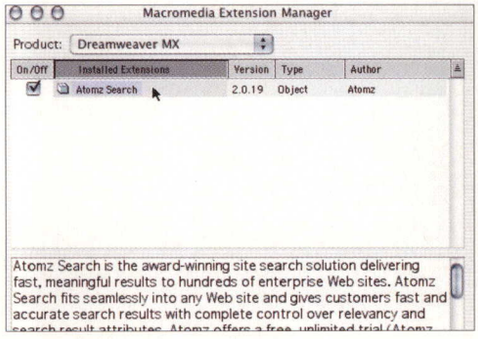
2 CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT

Once you've received the automated email confirming your registration, click the hyperlink included in this message to connect to the Atomz server and follow the setup wizard to create a new Express Search account. It's at this point that you'll need to enter basic information about your Web site.



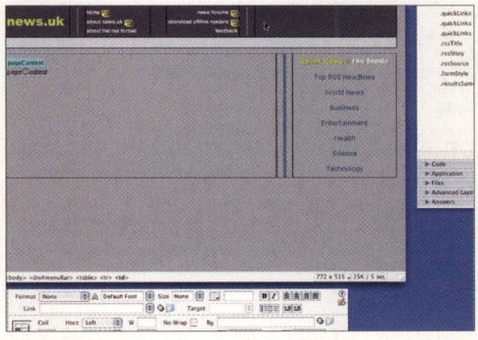
3 DOWNLOAD THE SEARCH EXTENSION

Once the account's been configured, you can download the Atomz Search extension for Dreamweaver by selecting Help>Macromedia Dreamweaver in the main menu and picking the right version for your system. This extension will generate the HTML code necessary to place a search form in your pages.


Macromedia Extension Manager
Product: Dreamweaver MX
Atomz Search is the award-winning site search solution delivering fast, meaningful results to hundreds of enterprise Web sites. Atomz Search fits seamlessly into any Web site and gives customers fast and accurate search results with complete control over relevancy and

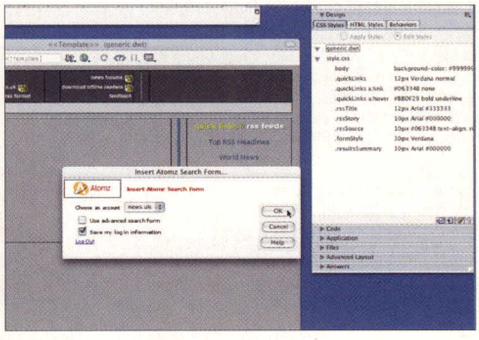
4 INSTALL THE EXTENSION

Once downloaded, open the Macromedia Extension Manager and pick Dreamweaver in the Product drop-down. In the main menu choose Install Extension, then the Atomz Search extension. Once installed, the Dreamweaver main menu and Insert palette features an option to access the Atomz extension.



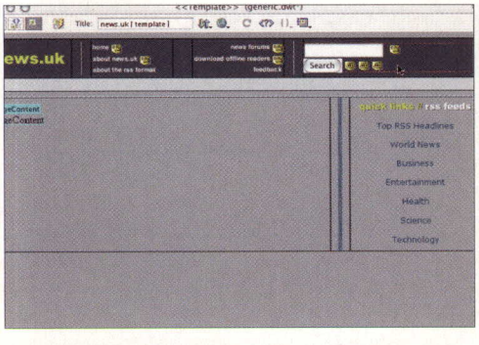
5 CREATING THE SEARCH PAGE

Make sure you have an Internet connection active, then open any page(s) in Dreamweaver that you want to contain the search facility. In the example shown, the search form will be incorporated into the navigation bar of each page based on the main site template.



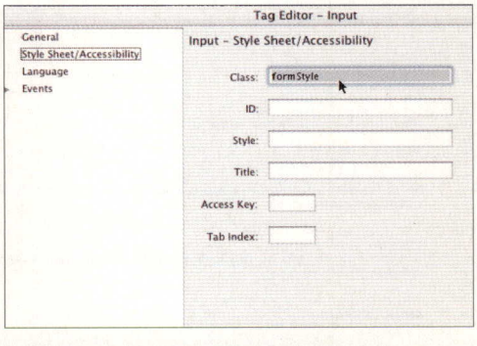
6 USING THE EXTENSION

Click in the page where you want the search form to appear then choose Insert>Atomz Search from the main menu. A connection is made to the Atomz server and you will then be asked to log in. In the Account options leave the Use Advanced Search Form option unchecked.



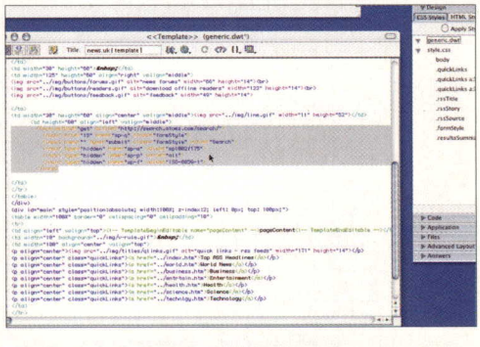
7 GENERATE BASIC SEARCH FORMS

Once confirmed, a search form will be generated in the page that contains additional hidden form data associating the form with your site account on the Atomz Search system. By leaving the Advanced option unchecked, the most basic type of search form is created – a Text field and Submit button.



8 STYLING THE FORM ELEMENTS

You can assign new style sheet info to these form elements to change their appearance. Remove the line break <br> character, then right-click (control-click for Macs) each element and choose Edit Tag in the contextual menu. Enter any pre-defined class names in the Style Sheet/Accessibility menu.



9 <INPUT TYPE="HIDDEN"> CONTENT

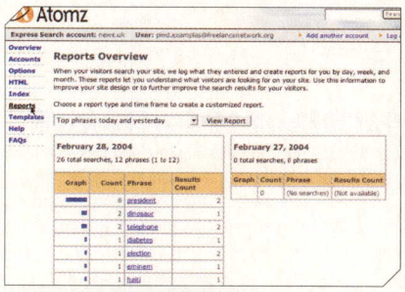
Now switch to Code view and find the form elements in the page code. The <input type="hidden"> tags sent with the form content contain your account number, whether the search engine matches all or any of the keywords entered, and a character set encoding reference.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
LET USERS SEARCH YOUR SITE WITH ATOMZ EXPRESS SEARCH

TECHNIQUE

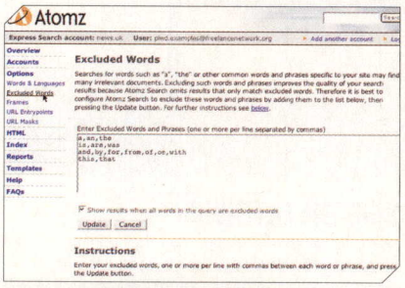
THE ONLINE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Atomz Express Search may be free, but it's not a second-rate or 'lite' version of a commercial product with a restrictive feature set. A full complement of professional online management tools and reference guides is available to help you get the most out of the system.



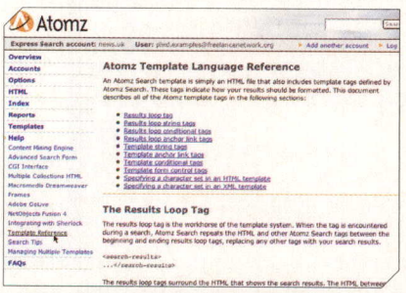
1 SEARCH STATISTICS

A full reporting facility gives you a detailed breakdown of the type and frequency of terms used in your site searches. This is invaluable in telling you what your users or customers were looking for (and perhaps didn't find) when they last visited your site.



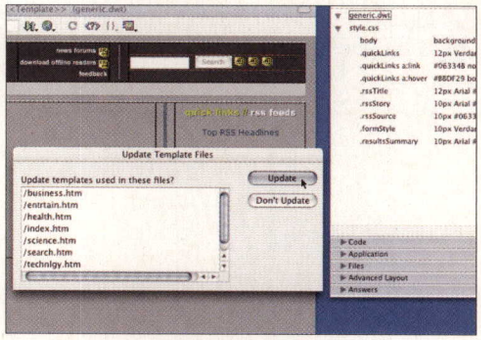
2 BETTER SEARCH RESULTS

A range of filters helps improve the success of your users' searches or restrict the number of results by excluding common words like 'a', 'the' and 'is' from search requests, or using comparison techniques to match misspelled words with soundalike terms.



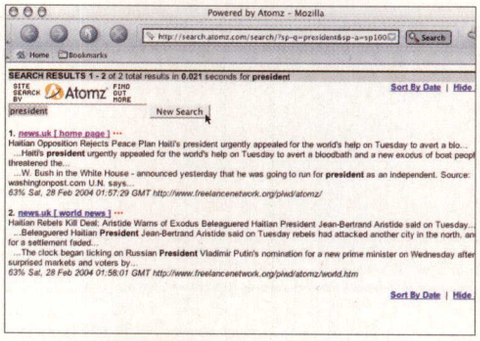
3 TEMPLATE AND CGI REFERENCE GUIDES

The template and CGI reference guides give you all the info and advice you need to offer users a professional and comprehensive search facility. They list parameters and configuration options available to control all aspects of search and results processes.



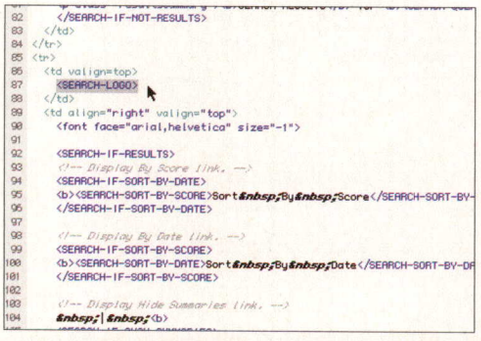
10 UPDATING YOUR SITE

With the code finalised, save your pages then upload them to the server. If you've incorporated the search form into a master template, Dreamweaver can update all pages based on this template when you save. Once confirmed, each page will feature a copy of the search form.



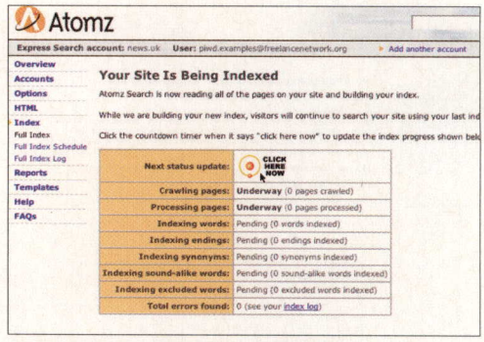
13 THE BASIC DESIGN

Before you make any changes to the standard template, this is how the results pages will look if you begin using the Atomz search engine straight away. The basic layout shows all the main features, but in its current state it's unlikely to integrate seamlessly with your site design!



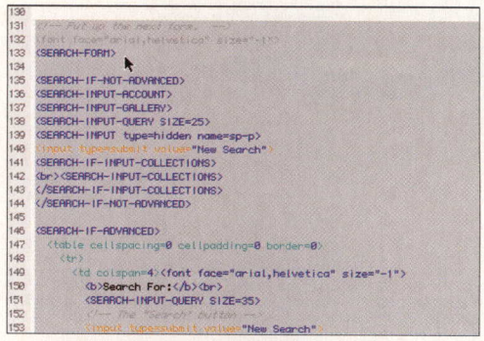
16 THE 'SITE SEARCH BY ATOMZ' GRAPHIC

The placeholder tag <SEARCH-LOGO> automatically includes a small 'Site Search by Atomz' graphic in the page. Although you can change the position of this graphic, it's a condition of the Express Search service that this is present and will be automatically placed in the page code if omitted.



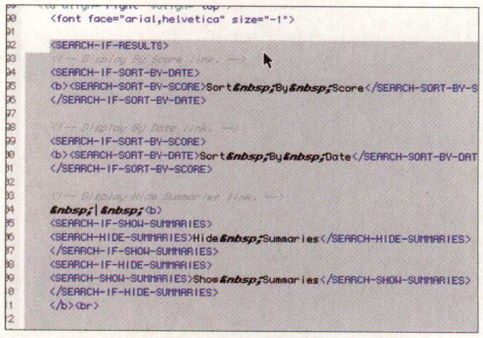
11 UPDATING THE SITE INDEX

Now open your Web browser and go to **www.atomz.com/login/** to access your account. If you're uploading your pages for the first time or have made any changes since you opened the account, you now need to update the site index stored on the Atomz Search servers.



14 REMOVE THE DUPLICATE SEARCH FORM

Open or create a new page in Dreamweaver that will display the search results. Switch to Code view then paste in the template code. The basic template places a new search form in the Results page, but you can remove this by deleting the code between the <SEARCH-FORM> </SEARCH-FORM> tags.



17 CHANGING THE RESULTS VIEWS

The next code section creates links that allow the visitor to view more search results, change the order in which the results are displayed and turn off the results summaries. This code is duplicated further down in the template to also display these links at the bottom of the page.

```
<title>Powered by Atomz</title>

</head>
<SEARCH-BODY>

<!-- Basic Look header. -->
<font face="arial, helvetica" size="+1">
<b><SEARCH-HEADER></b>
</font>

<!-- Results display and prev/next buttons -->
<table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
<tr><td width="100%" height=2 bgcolor="#ffffff" colspan=2>
<img src="http://search.atomz.com/search/i/bump.gif" border=0 vs
<tr><td width="100%" height=2 bgcolor="#000000" colspan=2>
<img src="http://search.atomz.com/search/i/bump.gif" border=0 vs

<tr>
  <td colspan="2" align="left" valign="top" bgcolor="#cccccc">
    <SEARCH-IF-RESULTS><font face="arial,helvetica" size="-1">
    <b>SEARCH RESULTS <SEARCH-LOWER> - <SEARCH-UPPER></b>
        of <SEARCH-TOTAL> total results in <b><SEARCH-TIME></b>
    </font></SEARCH-IF-RESULTS>
    <SEARCH-IF-NOT-RESULTS><font face="arial,helvetica" size="-1
    <b>SEARCH RESULTS</b> for <b><SEARCH-QUERY></b>
```

12 COPYING THE BASIC TEMPLATE CODE

After the index is complete, pick Templates>Template Editor from the main menu. The full-page Editable Text field contains the Standard Results Page template, elements of which will be reused in your customised template. Highlight and copy the code between the <SEARCH-BODY> </SEARCH-BODY> tags.

```
<img src="http://search.atomz.com/search/i/bump.gif" border=0 vspace=0 hspace=0 alt="
<tr><td width="100%" height=2 bgcolor="#000000" colspan=2>
<img src="http://search.atomz.com/search/i/bump.gif" border=0 vspace=0 hspace=0 alt="

<tr>
  <td colspan="2" align="left" valign="top" bgcolor="#cccccc">
    <SEARCH-IF-RESULTS><font face="arial,helvetica" size="-1">
    <b>SEARCH RESULTS <SEARCH-LOWER> - <SEARCH-UPPER></b>
        of <SEARCH-TOTAL> total results in <b><SEARCH-TIME></b> seconds for <b><SEARCH
    </font></SEARCH-IF-RESULTS>
    <SEARCH-IF-NOT-RESULTS><font face="arial,helvetica" size="-1">
    <b>SEARCH RESULTS</b> for <b><SEARCH-QUERY></b>
    </font></SEARCH-IF-NOT-RESULTS>
  </td>
</tr>
<tr>
  <td valign=top>
    <SEARCH-LOGO>
  </td>
  <td align="right" valign="top">
    <font face="arial,helvetica" size="-1">

    <SEARCH-IF-RESULTS>
    <!-- Display By Score link. -->
    <SEARCH-IF-SORT-BY-DATE>
    <b><SEARCH-SORT-BY-SCORE>Sort By Score</SEARCH-SORT-BY-SCORE></b>
    </SEARCH-IF-SORT-BY-DATE>
```

15 STYLING THE RESULTS TEXT

Throughout the template, code placeholder tags (in upper case) are used to indicate where the actual results will appear. The code shown generates a one-line message about the number of matches found. Although styled using <font> tags, you can apply your own style sheet formatting to this text.

```
<SEARCH-RESULTS LENGTH=160>
<!-- ResultListStart -->
<font face="arial,helvetica" size="-1">
  <p><b><SEARCH-INDEX>.
  <SEARCH-LINK><SEARCH-TITLE LENGTH=160></SEARCH-LINK></b>
  <font color=red>
  <SEARCH-IF-SCORE LOWER=20 UPPER=39>&#149;</SEARCH-IF-SCORE>
  <SEARCH-IF-SCORE LOWER=40 UPPER=59>&#149;&#149;</SEARCH-IF-SCORE>
  <SEARCH-IF-SCORE LOWER=60 UPPER=79>&#149;&#149;&#149;</SEARCH-IF-SCORE
  <SEARCH-IF-SCORE LOWER=80 UPPER=100>&#149;&#149;&#149;&#149;</SEARCH-
  </font><br><font size="-1">
  <SEARCH-IF-SHOW-SUMMARIES>
    <SEARCH-DESCRIPTION LENGTH=160><br>
    <SEARCH-IF-CONTEXT LENGTH=160>  <SEARCH-CONTEXT><br></SEARC
    <SEARCH-IF-CONTEXT LENGTH=160>  <SEARCH-CONTEXT><br></SEARC
    <SEARCH-IF-CONTEXT LENGTH=160>  <SEARCH-CONTEXT><br></SEARC
  </SEARCH-IF-SHOW-SUMMARIES>
  <i> <!-- RelevanceStart --><SEARCH-SCORE>% <!-- RelevanceEnd -->
  <SEARCH-IF-SHOW-SUMMARIES>
  <SEARCH-DATE>
  </SEARCH-IF-SHOW-SUMMARIES>
  <SEARCH-URL>
  </i></font><br>
</font>
```

18 THE RESULTS SUMMARIES

Below this follows code to display the search matches. In the standard template, a bullet point 'scoring' system is used to show how accurately the page content matches the user's search query. A results summary is also generated containing fragments of Web page text featuring the matched keyword(s).

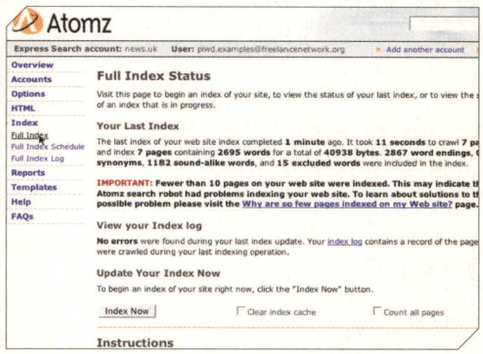
IN DETAIL: ATOMZ EXPRESS SEARCH – AN OVERVIEW

To get the most out of Atomz Express Search, it's helpful to understand how the system actually works

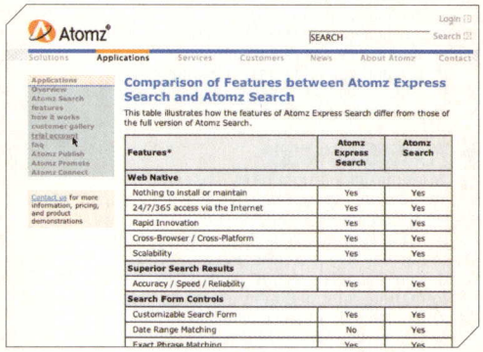
When you first create your Express Search account, the Atomz server inspects your site and copies any HTML documents it finds into its optimised database system. Subsequently, whenever a user makes a search request the system scans through its local copy of the site and identifies every page that matches the search query. The results are then inserted into a generic or customised template file based on standard HTML code before being sent back to the user.

This method has two advantages. Firstly, because the server doesn't have to keep 'crawling' your site, the system is optimised for the best performance. Secondly, because the results are always dynamically generated from the template file, changes you make to the design are instantly implemented, so users see their search results in the new format immediately. To ensure the local copy of your site is kept up to date, the system carries out site indexes at set intervals, but you can also initiate a manual index if your site changes between the intervals or you need to test any elements of the system.

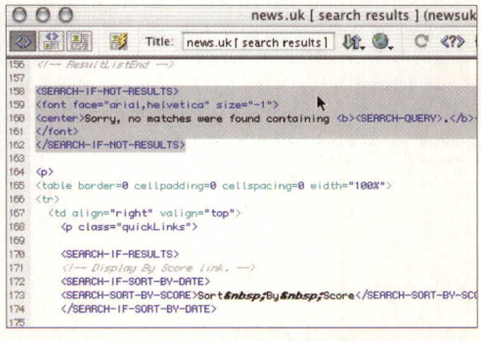
One thing to remember when designing your search results templates is that, because the final compiled page is generated from within the Atomz network, it doesn't have local access to any images, files or style sheets used in your site – the copy made of your site only contains the text elements (Web pages) that can be searched and indexed. If, as in the project example, you want to include the same page elements (like navigation buttons, graphics, etc) as featured on other pages in your site, make sure you use fully qualified URLs (as opposed to local references) to access files and hyperlinks. ■



■ The Atomz Search tool indexes your site dynamically, making for a quicker searching process for everyone involved

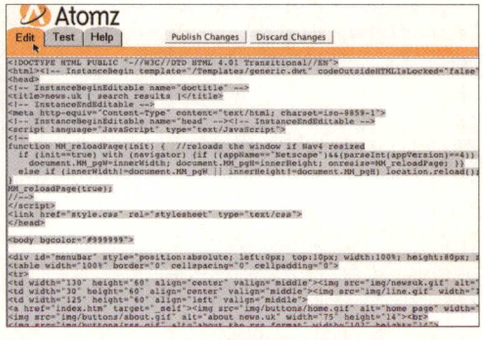


■ If you really want to start offering your visitors advanced searching options, you should consider Atomz Search



19 THE 'NO MATCHES FOUND' MESSAGE

In the event that no matches are found, a message is displayed where the results would normally appear. You can also use this facility to give your visitors advice about how to improve their search by, for example, rephrasing search terms, checking their spelling or using more/fewer words.



20 UPDATING THE TEMPLATE CODE

When you've finished making changes to your Results page, save the document, then in Code view copy all the HTML page code. Now log back into your Atomz account, access the Online Template editor and replace the standard code featured in the Edit window with the revised version.

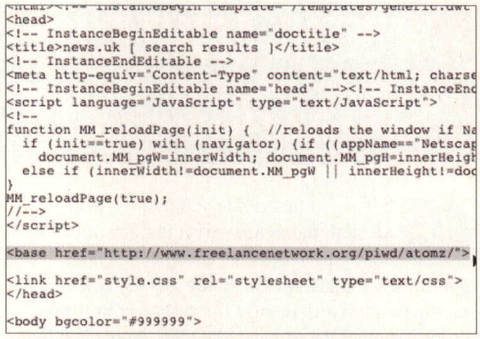
TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
LET USERS SEARCH YOUR SITE WITH ATOMZ EXPRESS SEARCH

GEEK SPEAK

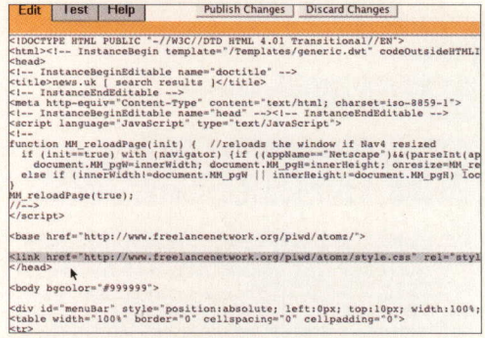
CGI
The Common Gateway Interface is not in itself a programming language, but provides a standardised format for other programming languages (such as C, Perl, Python, etc) to communicate directly with the Web server. Most commonly, these applications are designed to process data received from Web forms to achieve a range of different tasks such as sending emails, creating guestbook entries or updating databases. When a CGI application has successfully completed all its designated tasks, it will redirect the user's browser to a new Web page showing the results of the application or confirming that the data has been received.

CRAWLERS
Crawlers, also known as robots or spiders, are automated server applications that follow hyperlinks to compile an index of pages featured on a Web site. These are most commonly used by search engines like Google to search the Internet. Atomz itself uses crawlers to identify and obtain copies of any searchable pages included in your site. The crawlers start with the URL defined when the account is first opened (typically the home page), and will follow any hyperlinks found there to subsequent pages. Bear this in mind if you use 'splash' pages to open your site.

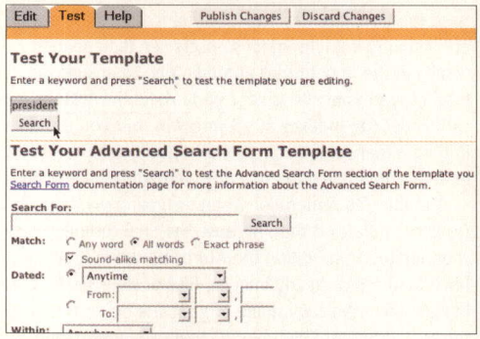
PLACEHOLDER CODE
When designing templates for server applications, special tags outside the normal HTML command set are placed inside pages to act as placeholders. These indicate where the actual 'live' text will appear in the design – enabling you to apply style or formatting information in the correct places. When compiling search results, the Atomz Search server places different results elements (such as the number of matches found or URLs for each search match) into a series of variables. The server then opens the customised template and steps through the code line by line, replacing the placeholders with new values based on the information saved in these variables.



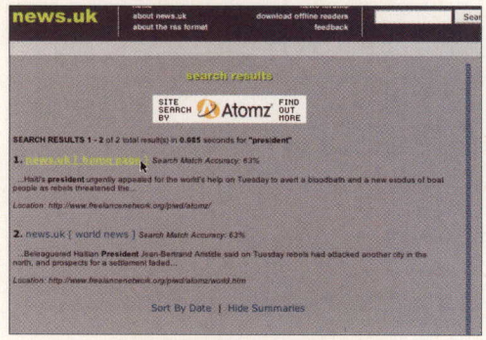
21 BROKEN LINKS AND MISSING IMAGES
As the Results page is generated from the Atomz Search system, page links or images referenced by relative URLs won't be found. To correct this, click in the <head> </head> section of code and enter <base href="http://www.yourdomainname.com/"> to resolve local file references to your full site address.



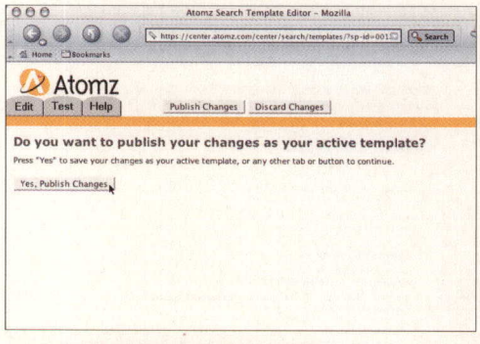
22 UPDATE THE STYLE SHEET REFERENCE
In the same way, if you use external style sheet files you should now update the <link> tag to include the full path name. Although URLs for images and hyperlinks are resolved correctly with the <base> tag, this feature doesn't work for local addresses contained in the <head> </head> section.



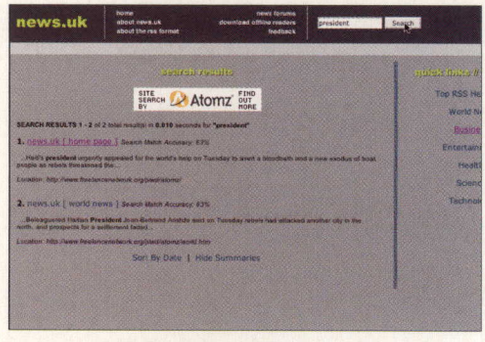
23 TEST SEARCHES
When you've finished editing the template, click on the Test button to preview the results. From here you can submit test search queries to the Atomz Search server (using the basic or advanced search form) which returns the results to you as they would appear in the 'live' customised template.


news.uk
about news.uk
about the rss format
download offline readers
feedback
search results
SITE SEARCH BY
Atomz
FIND OUT MORE
SEARCH RESULTS 1 - 2 of 2 total result(s) in 0.665 seconds for "president"
1. news.uk [home page] Search Match Accuracy: 63%
...Haiti's president urgently appealed for the world's help on Tuesday to avert a bloodbath and a new exodus of boat people as rebels threatened the...
Location: http://www.freelancenetwork.org/piwd/atomz/
2. news.uk [world news] Search Match Accuracy: 62%
...Beleaguered Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide said on Tuesday rebels had attacked another city in the north, and prospects for a settlement faded...
Location: http://www.freelancenetwork.org/piwd/atomz/world.htm
Sort By Date | Hide Summaries

24 THE SEARCH PAGE IN ACTION
The Search Results page will then appear in a separate browser window to allow you to see how well the completed design works. This facility is particularly helpful because it allows you to try out different page layouts without affecting any 'live' results templates already in operation for your site.


Atomz Search Template Editor - Mozilla
Home
Bookmarks
Atomz
Edit
Test
Help
Publish Changes
Discard Changes
Do you want to publish your changes as your active template?
Press "Yes" to save your changes as your active template, or any other tab or button to continue.
Yes, Publish Changes

25 PUBLISHING THE TEMPLATE
If, having seen the final result, you wish to make any changes, you can simply go back to the Online Template Editor and adjust the page code as required. If you're happy with the results you can 'publish' the template and activate the new Search Results format.



26 SEARCHING YOUR SITE
To test the results, open a new browser window and access your own site or visit the live project example at **www.freelancenetwork.org/piwd/atomz/** to see the system in action. The standard and customised search results templates for this site are in the Assets/Code folder on the cover CD.

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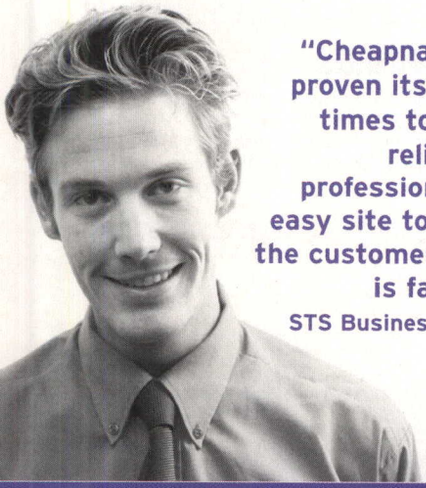
- **20** Email Accounts
- **300**Mb storage
- **75** forwarding addresses

only **£4.99** per month or £49.99 p.a.

BizMail

- **50** Email Accounts
- **750**Mb storage
- **150** forwarding addresses

only **£9.99** per month or £99.99 p.a.



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THE EXPERT: MARK BILLEN
Mark studied Software Engineering and Management at Bournemouth University for four years, a course which saw him tackle heavyweight languages like Java and JavaScript, and develop his already burgeoning experience in HTML and CSS. Allied to this, Mark has also been a keen artist for many years, and likes nothing more than to create stunning pieces of digital art.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Find out how Dreamweaver's own tools can leave your site error-free

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
15 minutes

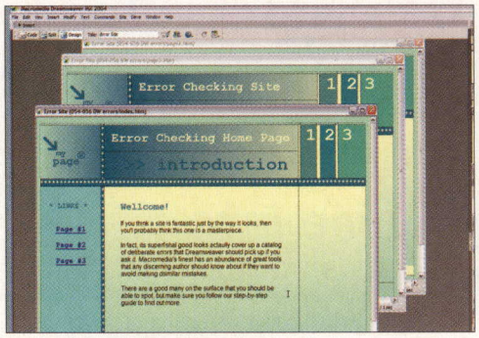
ON THE DISC
Dreamweaver/ Tutorial files: index.html, page2.html, page3.html & image files

KEEP YOUR SITE FREE FROM ERRORS IN DREAMWEAVER

Take advantage of Dreamweaver MX's wealth of built-in validation tools and make sure your site is in perfect condition before unleashing it onto the Net

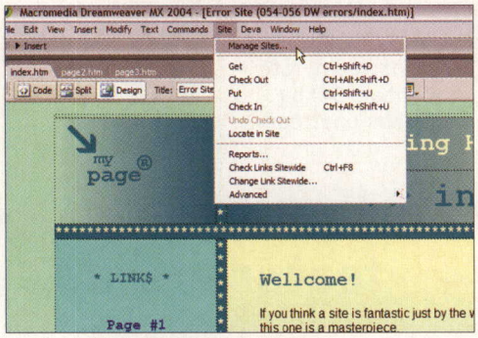
Building truly effective sites can seem like an almost impossible task these days. The expectations of your potential visitors have increased as the Net itself has grown, making it harder to win the respect that a pretty Flash intro might once have commanded. This has led to authors having to go back to the basics of what good page design is all about, and examine issues of accessibility and usability in the process. Add to this the prospect of having to build around continually shifting browser technology and HTML standards, and you soon realise that covering all these bases before your efforts reach the server can be daunting.

Dreamweaver has a raft of features that will not only test your projects for all this, but also ensure that embarrassing errors like spelling mistakes and broken links don't rear their ugly heads. In this tutorial we'll also reveal techniques for performing these vital checks across your sites, and hopefully help you produce winning projects. ■



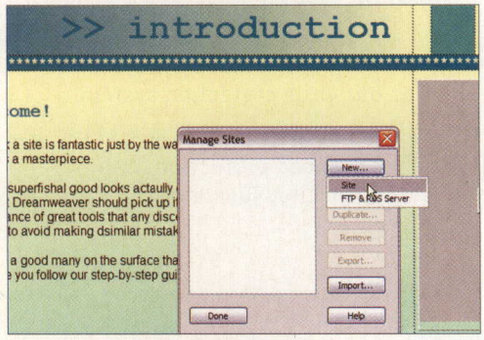
1 BAD EXAMPLE

To simulate and illustrate Dreamweaver's many site-checking tools, we've put together a mini-site that is purposefully error-ridden. This is what we'll use to perform all the various steps, and you'll need it – or an equivalent – open and ready to go.



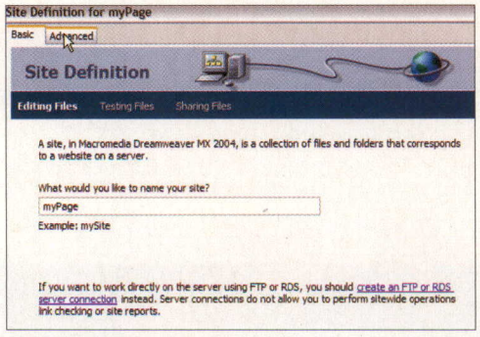
2 MANAGE SITES

Perhaps the first thing you need to do when preparing to check your site is make Dreamweaver aware of it. Many would argue that this should be performed before starting a new project, but you can do it at any time by selecting the Manage Sites option from the Site menu.



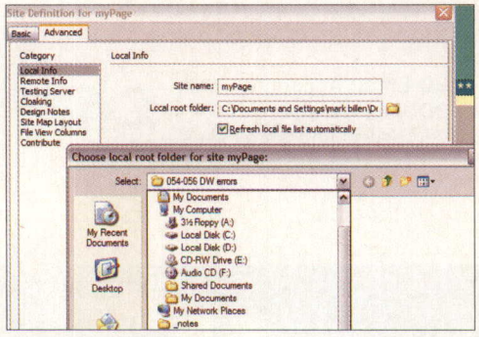
3 MAKING PROFILES

The next mini dialog you see is used to list new or existing site and server profiles. These are used to let Dreamweaver know some important details for your different projects, so click the New button before selecting Site in order to continue.


Site Definition for myPage
Basic
Advanced
Site Definition
Editing Files
Testing Files
Sharing Files
A site, in Macromedia Dreamweaver MX 2004, is a collection of files and folders that corresponds to a website on a server.
What would you like to name your site?
myPage
Example: mySite
If you want to work directly on the server using FTP or RDS, you should create an FTP or RDS server connection instead. Server connections do not allow you to perform sitewide operations link checking or site reports.

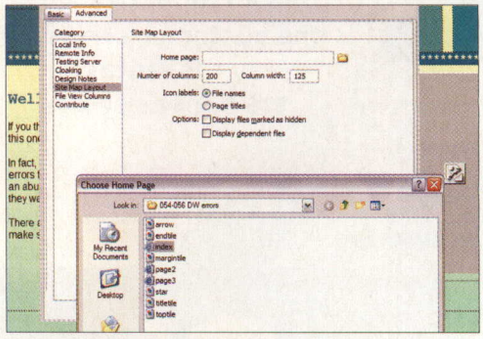
4 SITE DEFINITION

Giving your new site profile a name is the first part of the process, and you'll see that the first stage of the Definition dialog asks you to enter one. This is used as a collective reference to all the files in your project, so pick something meaningful before clicking the Advanced tag.



5 ROOT FOLDER

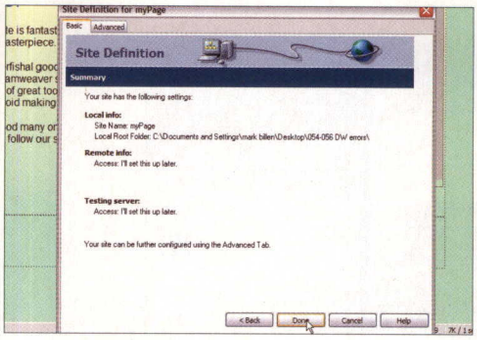
In the Advanced section you'll find many different categories that relate to your site, although we only want to set a couple of important items of information. In the Local Info set of options we need to provide a path to the files by browsing for the directory under Local Root Folder.



6 SITE MAP LAYOUT

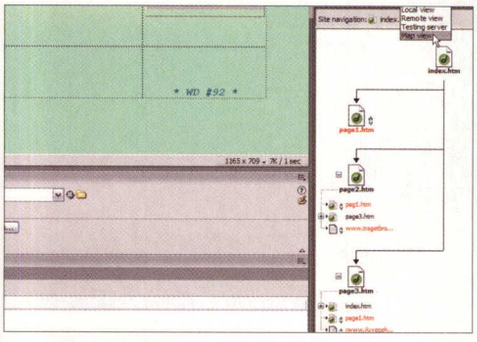
One of the ways to test your site structure is to let Dreamweaver plot a map which shows how all the pages link. To make this possible you need to first identify which document is intended as the home page by selecting the Site Map Layout category and again browsing for the path.

KEEP YOUR SITE FREE FROM ERRORS IN DREAMWEAVER



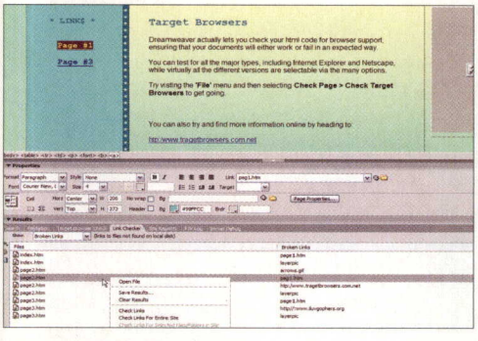
7 SITE SUMMARY

Return to the Basic tab once again and use the Next buttons to navigate through the remaining options. Most of these relate to server access which you can go back and edit later, so simply leave them as default until you reach the Summary window. Confirm by clicking the Done button.



8 MAP READER

All the files within your new definition should now be listed in the Files panel on the right of the screen. To view a site map, select the Map View item from the second drop-down menu. A diagram showing how your site fits together will appear, with broken or invalid links shown in red.


Target Browsers
Page #1
Page #2
Page #3
Dreamweaver actually lets you check your html code for browser support, ensuring that your documents will either work or fail in an expected way
You can test for all the major types, including Internet Explorer and Netscape, while virtually all the different versions are selectable via the many options.
Try visiting the 'File' menu and then selecting Check Page > Check Target Browsers to get going.
You can also try and find more information online by heading to:
http://www.tragetbrowsers.com.net

9 LINK REPORTS

Another way to validate your links is to use the Results panel at the bottom of the screen. Select the Link Checker tab and click the green triangle button to choose Check Links For Entire Site. All broken links will then appear in the window for you to double-click and amend accordingly.

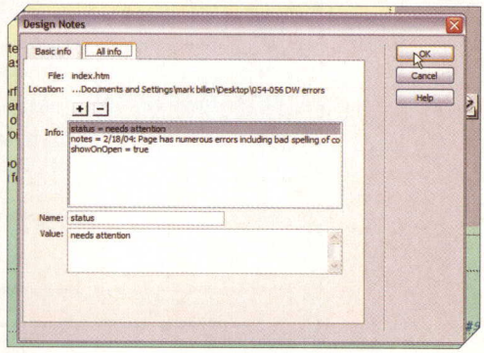
IN DETAIL: MAKING NOTES

Help prevent mistakes by using Dreamweaver's facility for adding revision histories to your pages

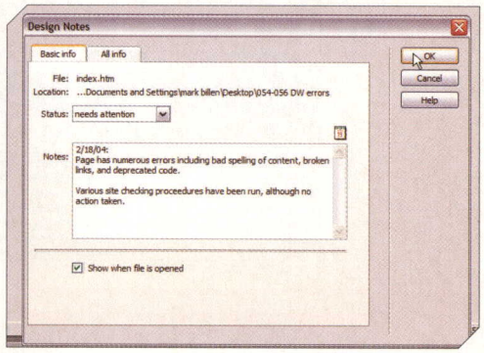
It's easier said than done to avoid errors in your sites by simply not making them in the first place, but you can take steps to make them less likely. However careful and experienced you are there will always be things you overlook, but starting out with a proper plan before you rush into designing is always preferable. Dreamweaver's checking tools such as the Code Validator, Accessibility Report and Browser Compatibility wizard should really be thought of as constant assistants and never relied upon at the last minute. Even the great facilities for generating a site map shouldn't really suggest anything unexpected if you follow your own pre-drawn diagram from the start.

However, if you're embarking on a potentially large and complicated project, Dreamweaver does have a clever facility it calls Design Notes. This is primarily meant for serious development work and basically lets you attach text to pages which describes what has been done or needs doing to it. Dates can be inserted to give a history or timeframe to the work, while a predetermined status like 'draft', 'beta', 'final' and 'needs attention' can be set. The text is never shown in a browser, but can be accessed and edited at any time via the Design Notes option on the main File menu. Here you can also set the notes to be displayed when the page is opened for edit, which is obviously invaluable when teams of designers need to communicate and coordinate their efforts.

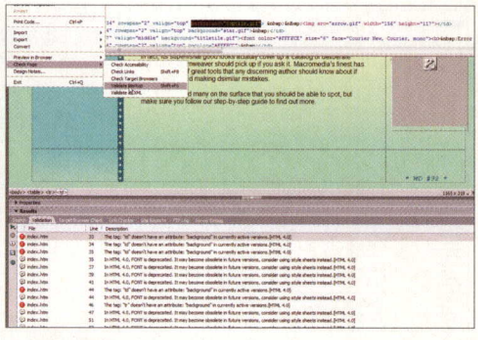
By taking advantage of an ingenious and little-known tool like this, you can further limit the chance of errors occurring or slipping through to the Web. ■



■ The Design Notes dialog lets you define, arrange and remove any text entry in the page's list

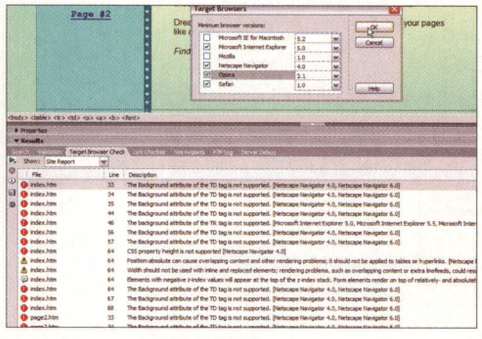


■ With the checkbox selected, you can set the notes to appear when a page is opened



10 MARKUP DOCTOR

The Results panel also has a Validation tab which lets you check the syntax of the code across your site. This will typically tell you whether any of the tags are 'deprecated' or becoming obsolete, such as <font>, and whether certain elements fail to be supported by different language versions.



11 BROWSER-FRIENDLY

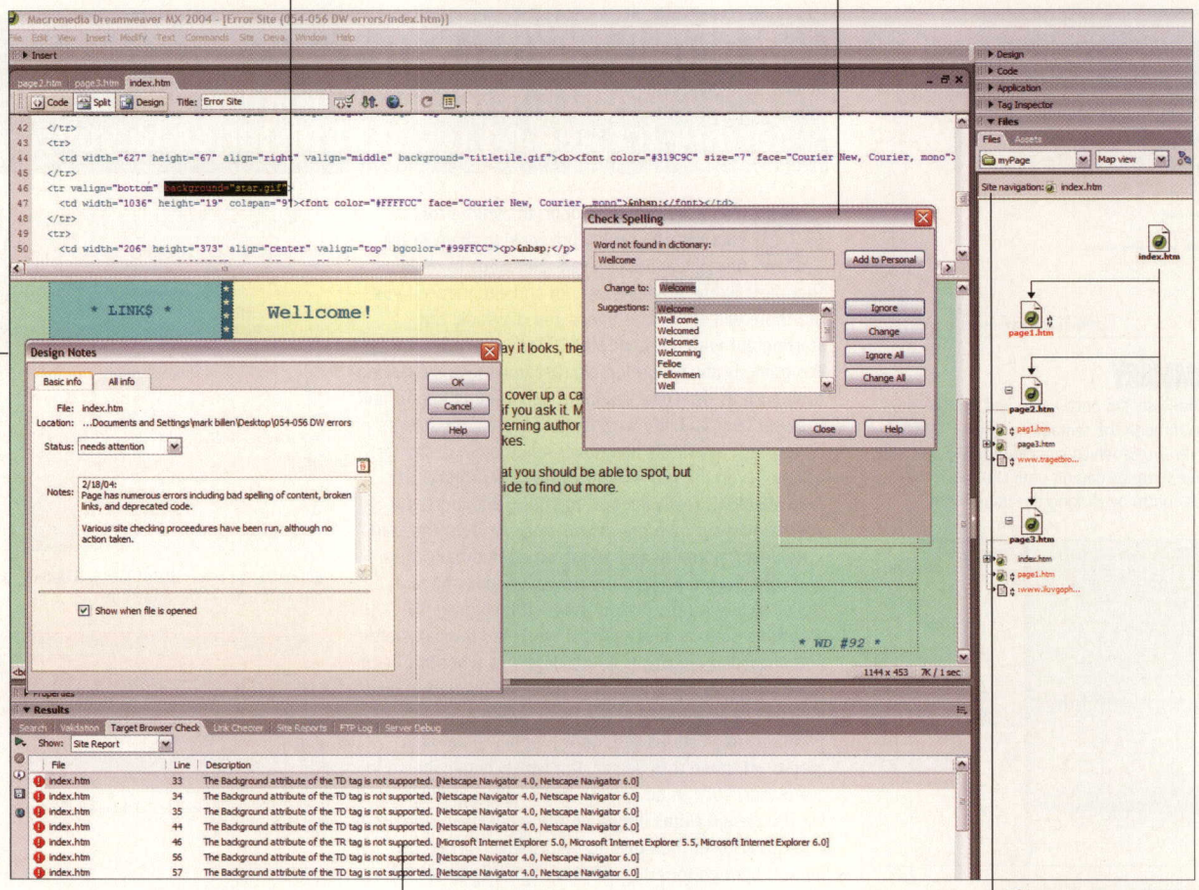
To test your site's compatibility with multiple browsers, you can visit the Target Browser Check window. Click the green triangle as before to initiate the report, or select Settings to define the versions you wish to work with. You can then use the info to provide alternative content.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
KEEP YOUR SITE FREE FROM ERRORS IN DREAMWEAVER

Design Notes
This dialog will appear every time you open a document if you tell it to, and is used to log and display various development notes you wish to be reminded of

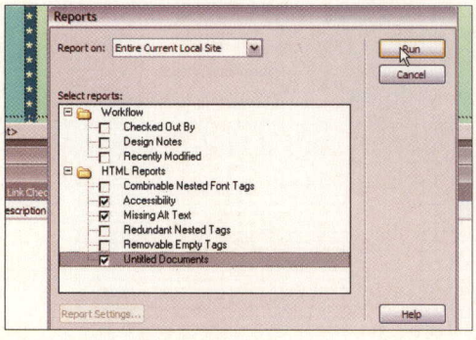
Code Indicator
Although line numbers are quoted by all reports, double-clicking a listed error will jump you to the offending part of the page or code. You can then monitor any amendments you make by switching to the Split view

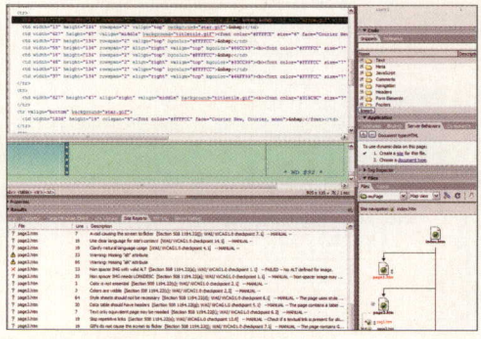
Spell Checker
Paying attention to the quality of your text-based content is paramount, and Dreamweaver's simple Spell Checker will ensure that no silly mistakes creep into your site

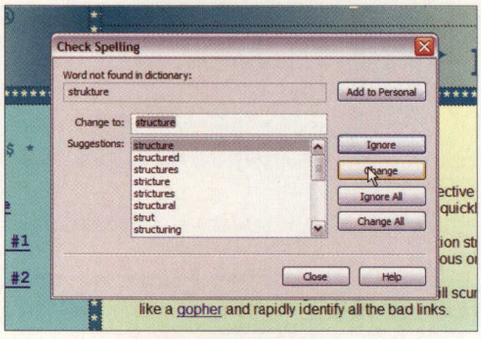


Results window
All the reports such as Code Validation, Target Browser and Links Checks can be launched from this tabbed panel, with all the subsequent results listed here as well

Site Map
Within the Files box of the panel set, you can view your site project as a hierarchical diagram or map. Pages are represented as icons and connected by the links, while any that are deemed broken or non-existent are shown in red







12 PICK 'N MIX
Some reports can be performed in tandem with others or customised to identify certain things. View the Site Reports tab and click the green triangle once more. A box will appear containing checkboxes for the tests you wish to carry out, including a handy one for accessibility.

13 BENDING THE RULES
After you've hit Run, you'll see that rules have been applied to your site based on several accessibility standards. You can alter these, but typically you'll find missing 'Alt' text attributes and valuable advice on the design. Areas identified will be underlined in red within the document's Code view.

14 CHECK YOUR SPELLING
Last but by no means least, you should try running the Spell Checker on your page content. This can be done per page and works just like a word processor from the Text> Check Spelling menu. A dictionary of suggestions is provided, but don't rely on it to pick up any odd URL links.

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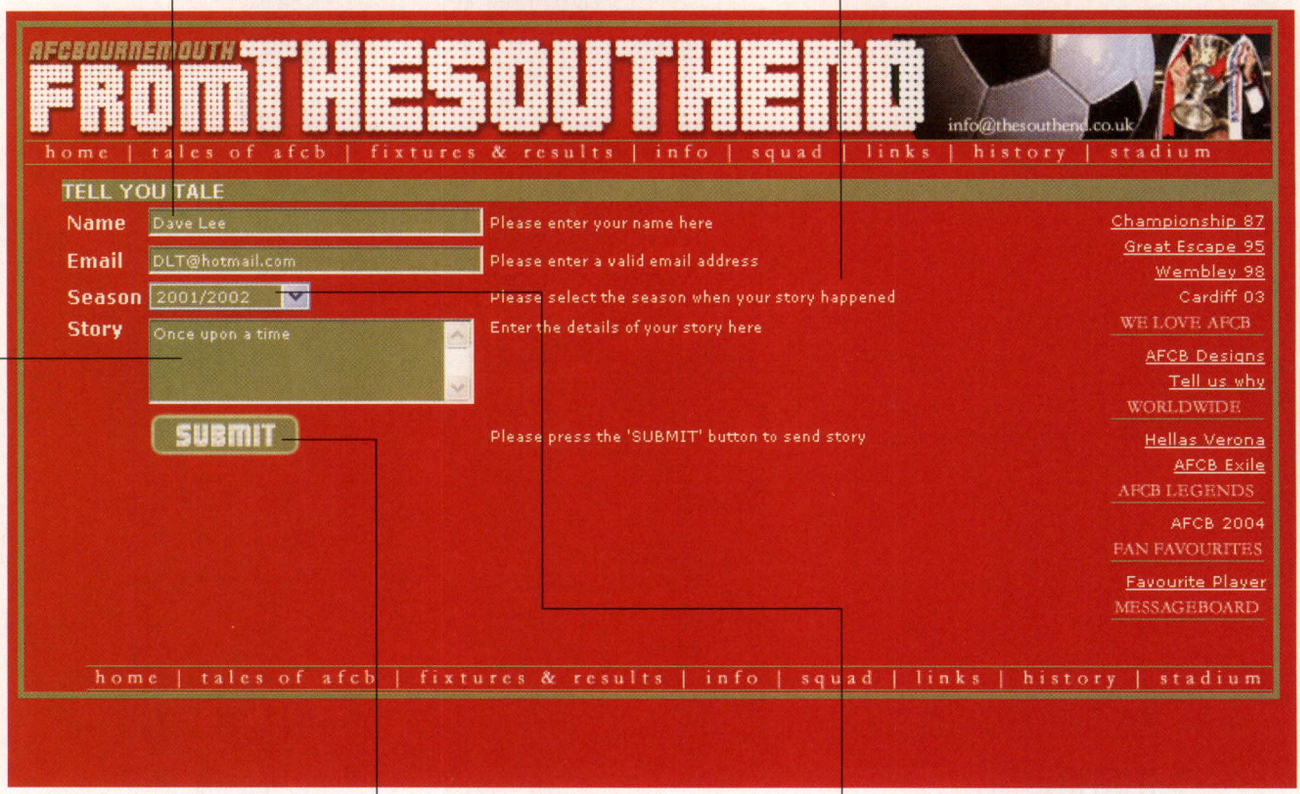
TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
CREATE ATTRACTIVE WEB FORMS IN DREAMWEAVER

THE EXPERT: STEVE JENKINS

Steve first got into Web design via his love of football. An avid Bournemouth FC fan, he chose to set up his own fan site, and realised he had to learn a lot about Web design in a very short time. The site, **www.thesouthend.co.uk**, is still updated every day, and Steve uses PHP, MySQL and a mixture of Dreamweaver 3 (his first Web design package) and MX to style up his pages.

Text field
The Text field is a simple component where a user can add text. A style sheet allows you an array of options – in this example we've changed the background colour, font and text size

Tables
A table gives you control over the various form components and any text you add to the form. Text is placed in one column, while the form components are placed in another. This allows you to line up components and text for better consistency



Text area
The Text area is essentially the same as a Text field but with the option to have multiple lines. Again, the attributes of the component can be adjusted via the CSS sheet

Image field
This component effectively replaces those very nice but dull Submit buttons that you get in Dreamweaver forms. In this example we've created our own button to match the page style

List/Menu
In this example the List/Menu component has been attributed to the Menu option. This is essentially a drop-down list, which again can have its attributes edited. Here you can add values that the user must choose from

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Customise standard form components to create great-looking forms

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
20-30 minutes

ON THE DISC
Dreamweaver/ **Tutorial files:** CSS [folder], images [folder], submit.html & more

CREATE ATTRACTIVE WEB FORMS IN DREAMWEAVER

Dreamweaver MX presents some form components that are dull and lacklustre. We show you how to add shine and sparkle...

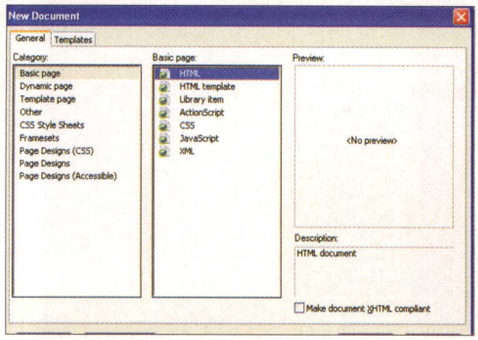
Dreamweaver MX is smart and can perform just about any task needed for a Web page. Adding text and images brings a page to life, but it's still static and can only be viewed and read. Introducing interactivity will add a new dimension to a user's Web experience. There are numerous options, but a low-level choice is that of the form. These are simple creatures and their components tend to be dull, grey and unimaginative. Customising components brings colour, sparkle and personality to a Web page.

The beauty of customising components is the consistency it brings to a page as well as a site. Forms consist of a variety of components including Text Field, Button, Text Area, List/Menu and Image Field. To create consistent components, Dreamweaver has CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). These not only remove the hard work of formatting but also create a code-efficient page – due to the loss of hundreds of <font> tags. But for us the Button component takes the real glory.

Read on to find out how you can create fabulous forms. ■

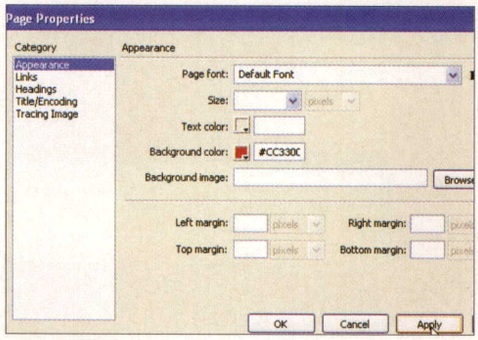
TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER

CREATE ATTRACTIVE WEB FORMS IN DREAMWEAVER



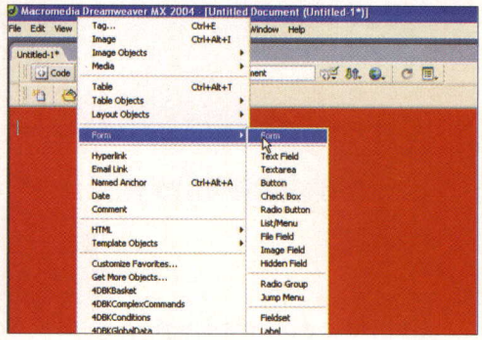
1 GETTING STARTED

To get started you'll need to create a new page via New from the File menu. This will open the New Document dialog box. Select Basic Page from the Category window and HTML from Basic Page. Alternatively, open a page you created previously.



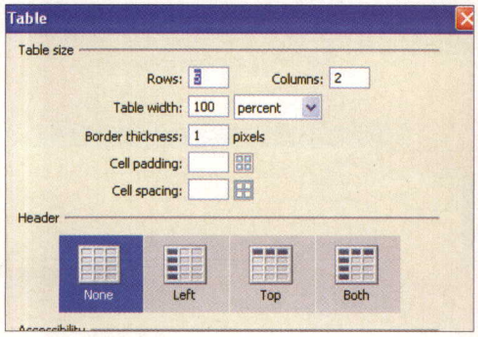
2 BACKGROUND COLOUR

When creating a form it's a good idea to add the background colour of the page you're going to use the form with. This gives you a better idea of how the form will look. Select Modify>Page Properties and then Background Color (#CC3300).



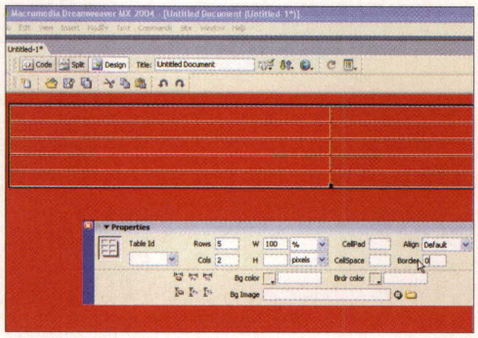
3 INSERT FORM

The next step is to add the form tags by selecting Insert>Form and Form again. This will add the form tags in the code of the page and will be represented on the Design page by a red dotted outline with the cursor inside.



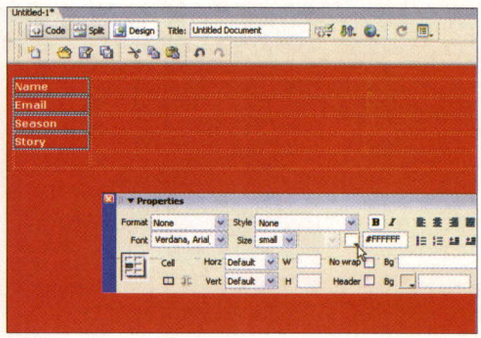
4 INSERT TABLE

A table will allow you to place the form components in some kind of order, ensuring a good-looking form. You can insert a table via Insert and Table. For this guide we are going to insert a table with 5 rows and 2 columns.



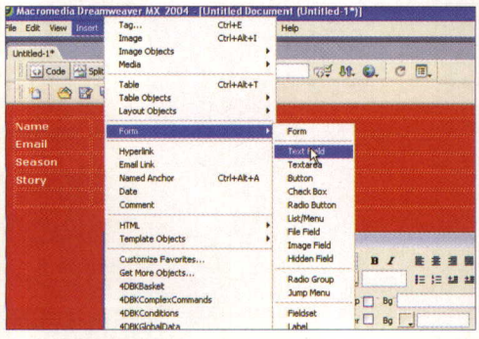
5 NO BORDERS

When you add a table to a page, it will come with a border that will display itself when seen in a Web browser. To remove the border, select the table and delete the '1' or enter a zero in the Border box in the Properties window.



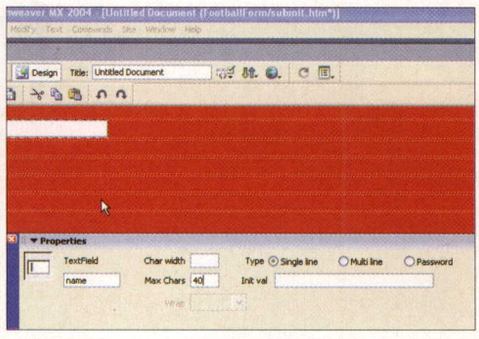
6 TEXT LABELS

A form component will need text labels to identify what each component represents. In the top four rows of the left column add the following text: 'Name', 'Email', 'Season', 'Story'. Now select the text and format using the Properties window.



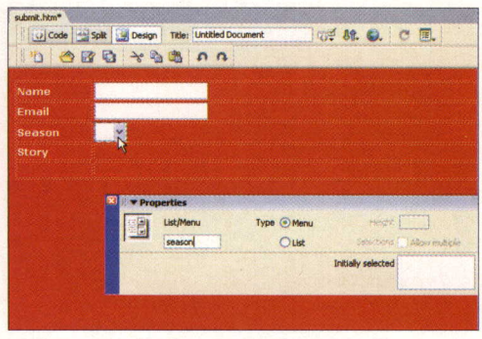
7 TEXT FIELD

A form has a range of components that can be added. The first form component you're going to add is the Text field. Click inside the top row and go to the Insert menu. Select Form, then select Text Field from the menu to add.



8 NAME THE COMPONENT

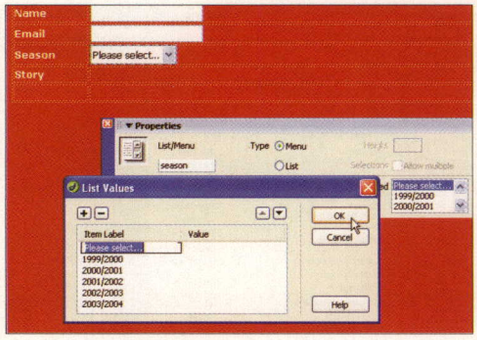
Once you've added the Text field, the next step is to fill out the properties. First give your Text field a label, for example 'Name', and add a value to Max Chars, for example 40. The Type will stay as Single Line and the Init Val empty.



9 MORE TEXT COMPONENTS

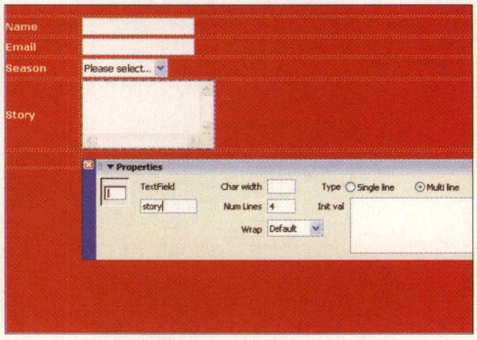
Now in the second row add another Text field and name it 'Email'. In the third row insert a List menu component. Name this 'Season' and keep the Type as Menu. To populate the menu you need to press the List Values button.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
CREATE ATTRACTIVE WEB FORMS IN DREAMWEAVER



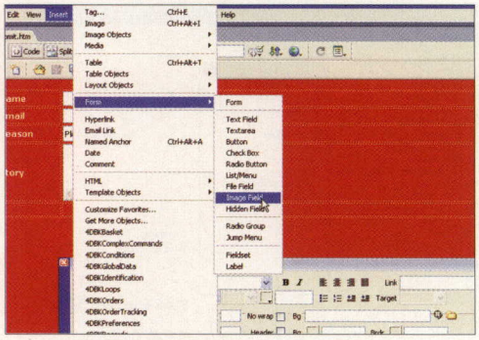
10 LIST VALUES

The List Values dialog box allows you to add labels via the '+' button. This is the value that appears at the top of the list; it's a good idea to add something like 'Please Select...'. Repeat the process to add more labels, then select your initially selected label.



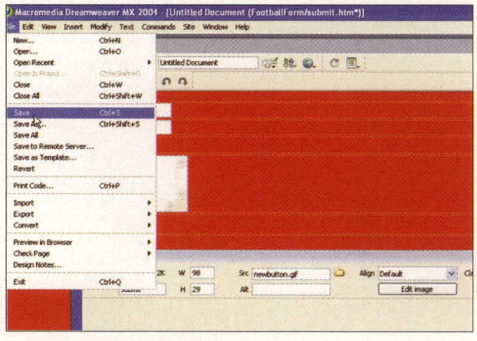
11 TEXT AREA

In the fourth row of the table you're now going to add the Text Area component. Select the Insert menu followed by Form and Textarea. Name the area 'Story', select Type, Multi line and add '4' to the Num Lines text box.



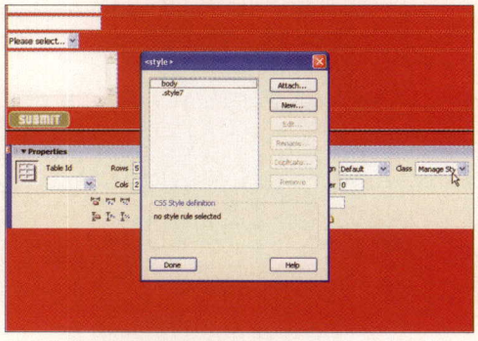
12 IMAGE FIELD

In the fifth and final row of the table you're going to add a Submit button to get the form to work. Instead of using the standard dull grey form button Dreamweaver provides, let's insert an image via Insert>Form and Image Field.



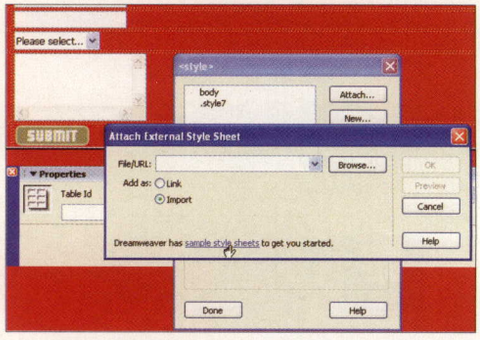
14 NAME AND SAVE

The basics and essential elements of the form have now been completed, so this would be a good time to name and save. First select the form and name it in Form Name. Now select File and Save, and name the page.



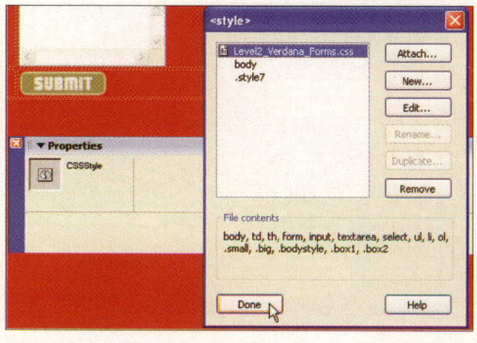
15 CHECKING YOUR STYLE

Select the whole form again, and from the Properties window select Manage Styles from the Class drop-down list. This will open the <style> dialog box, where you'll see the CSS Style Definitions that you have created so far.



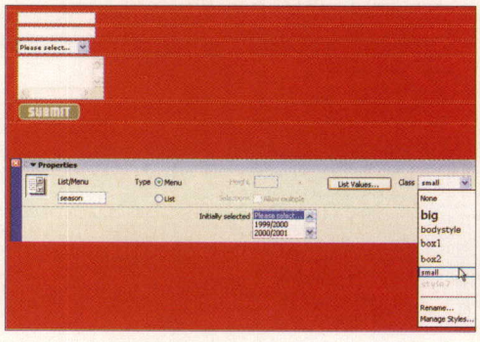
16 ADDING STYLE

The next step is to add a CSS style sheet to give your form components some consistency. Click on the Attach button to open the Attach External Style Sheet window, then click Import and, lastly, the Sample Style Sheets link.



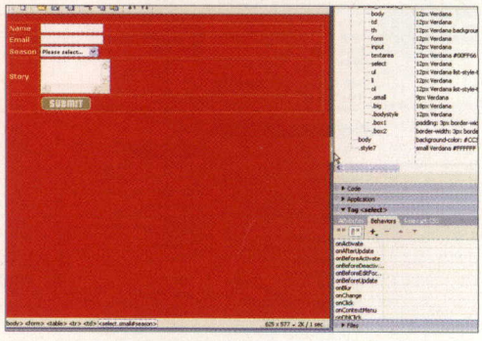
18 NEW SHEET

Selecting a sample style sheet and pressing OK will again reveal the <style> dialog box that appeared in Step 15. You'll now see that the style sheet you selected has appeared in the list. Press Done to close the dialog box.



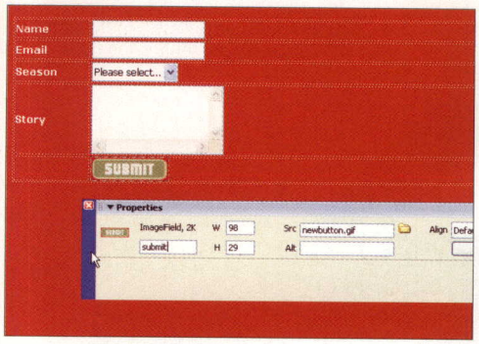
19 CLASS AND STYLE

Now select your form and open the Class drop-down list, where you'll see a list of new additions. For this form we're going to use the Small option. To apply, select each component, then select Small from the drop-down list and save.



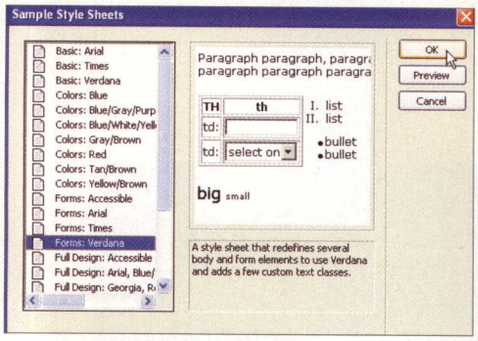
20 TAKE A LOOK

Now you can see the individual CSS style components in the Design window. Click the '+' sign next to the <style> tag, then press the '+' next to the Level2_Verdana CSS style chosen earlier. You will now see all the components with their allocated style.



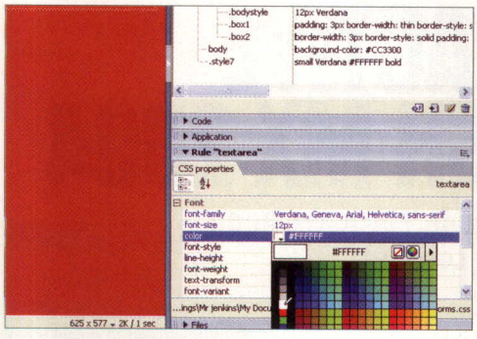
13 SUBMIT BUTTON

Selecting the Image Field component will open the Select Image Source dialog box. Now browse to the location of the image that you want to use and click on the OK button. You will now need to rename the image 'Submit'.



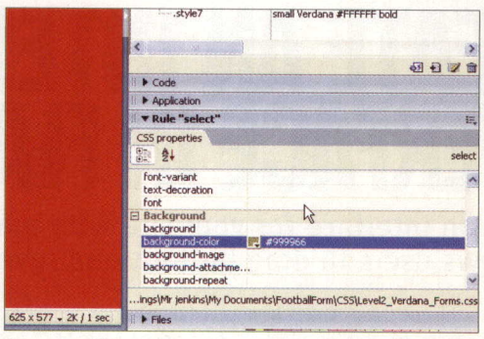
17 SAMPLE STYLE SHEETS

Clicking the Sample Style Sheets link will open the Sample Style Sheets dialog box. Browse down the list until you find the Forms option, where you'll see four options. From the list select Forms: Verdana and then press OK.



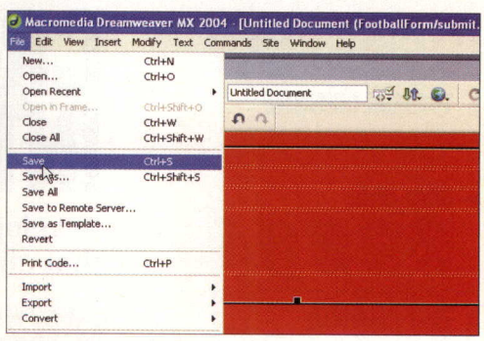
21 EDIT STYLE

Now that you have a style sheet applied to the form components, you can edit to suit your needs. Click Textarea to reveal its CSS Properties in the window below. To change the text colour select the Color box and choose your colour.



22 NEW COLOUR

The CSS Properties window will also allow you to change the colour of other components. First select the Background category, then Input to change Text fields, Textarea to change Text area and Select for List/Menu. Now select the style sheet and save changes.



23 THE FINISHED ARTICLE

Now that you've completed your form, you have several options. You can save the page as an HTML page and create a link to reach it. Alternatively, you might prefer to create the form in the page that you actually want to use.

IN DETAIL: CSS (CASCADING STYLE SHEETS)

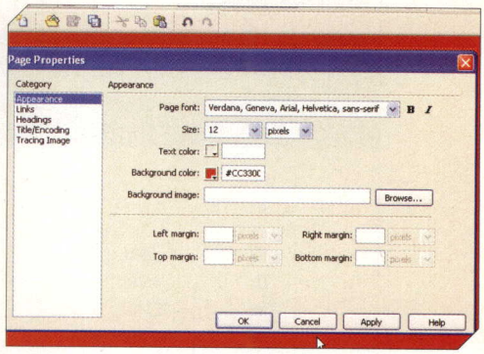
CSS can bring consistency and style to a form. We give you a quick overview of what's on offer

Cascading Style Sheets have long been part of the Web design process, but seemingly adopted by very few. Using CSS brings essential advantages to a Web project and has long been championed by Macromedia and Dreamweaver.

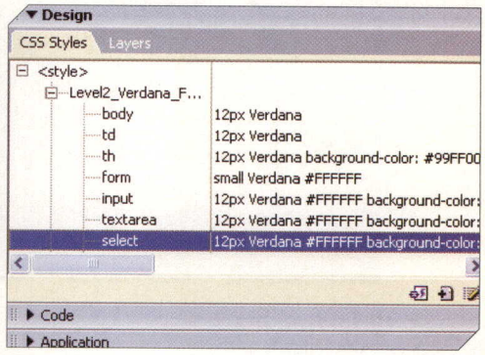
Dreamweaver has been particularly CSS-friendly since version MX, which sported a number of tweaks. One of the more obvious is the remodelled Properties window. This contains various boxes for viewing styles and letting you apply directly from a window. The new Properties panel also gets in on the act by allowing you to edit any CSS rules. This enables users to create far more personal style sheets without much difficulty. Change the font style, size or colour, or even play with background colour.

Dreamweaver MX has plenty of CSS sample sheets, saving you the hard work of creating your own. A quick visit to File and New will reveal the New Document dialog box, with the CSS Style Sheets option making an appearance in Category. Further investigation will reveal that several style sheets have been especially created for use with forms. These allow various components, eg Text Field, Text Area, to veer away from the standard white background and limited fonts.

If the thought of creating, adding or editing Cascading Style Sheets strikes fear into your heart, you can take a slight deviation. Page Properties essentially performs the same function when creating a Web site. This is split into a number of categories, letting you create a more personalised view for each section. Apply styles to a range of headings, decide background colour, font, font colour, size and much more. ■



■ If you want to do it the old-fashioned way, Dreamweaver lets you configure your site fonts by hand using Page Properties

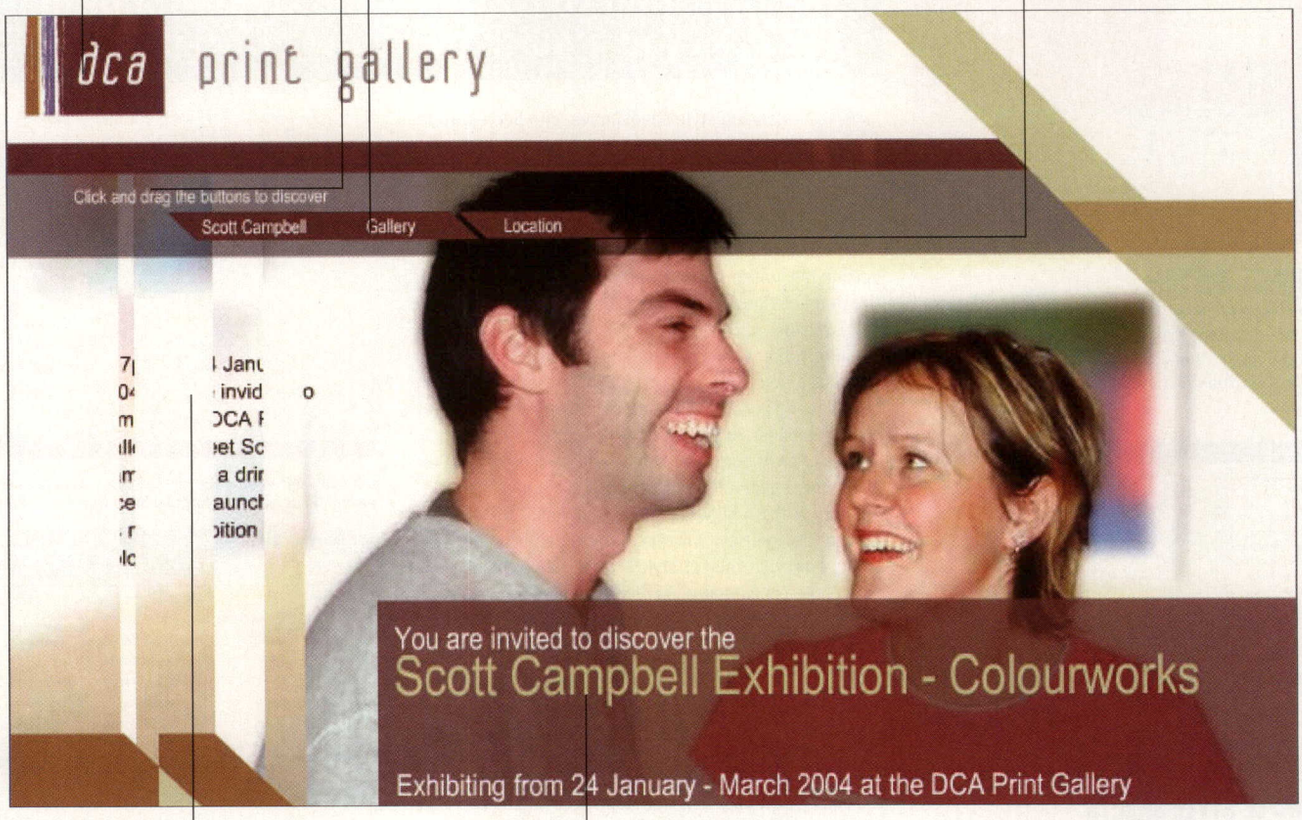


■ For a much easier life, however, we suggest you make the CSS features within Dreamweaver your new best friend

CREATE AN INTERACTIVE INTERFACE IN FLASH MX 2004

THE EXPERT: MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, and has been a regular contributor to *Practical Internet Web Designer* for many issues. Although Mark comes from a print background – he's a former designer of *PI* – he is now much more involved in Web design technology, and specialises in everything from Flash through to 3D graphics and PHP.


Click the logo
Clicking the logo will return users to the Welcome page
Instructions
Add instructions to allow the user to navigate with this system. They only appear the first time the user clicks on a button
Drag the button
Buttons are dragged to the left-hand side to reveal the content through a mask
Don't let go!
If the button is let go during the dragging without docking on the right, it turns back slowly to the left of the screen and returns the mask
dca print gallery
Click and drag the buttons to discover
Scott Campbell
Gallery
Location
You are invited to discover the
Scott Campbell Exhibition - Colourworks
Exhibiting from 24 January - March 2004 at the DCA Print Gallery
Unfolding mask
The mask unfolds gradually as the button is dragged across the screen to reveal the site content
Add interface and branding
Add the interface design and branding strategy for the Web site

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create an interactive interface to involve your users

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
One hour

ON THE DISC
Flash/Tutorials: dca-finish.fla, dca-finish.swf, dca-start.fla & code text files

PART ONE

CREATE AN INTERACTIVE INTERFACE IN FLASH MX 2004

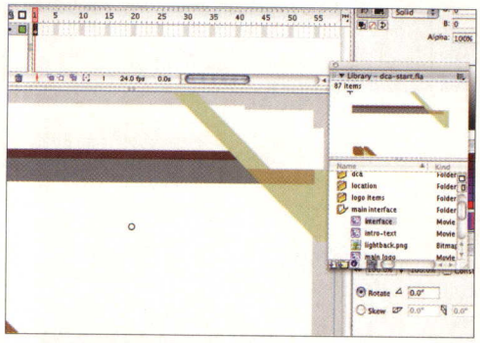
Develop an interface for your site with masks in Flash MX 2004 that allows users to drag buttons and reveal content

What's the one thing all sites have in common? Okay there's loads, but they do all need a navigation system to take you from one area to another. Whether it's a simple piece of text turned into a link or some fancy rollover animation, all sites have links. It's what makes the Web... well, the Web!

To make your site stand out, you've probably considered all sorts of ways of presenting your content to users. In this tutorial we'll make an interface that reacts a little differently to the standard ones on the average Web site. Instead of simply clicking, the user will need to drag buttons to the other side of the screen to reveal the relevant content from a dynamic mask which moves and animates in time with the mouse drag. If the user doesn't drag the button to the other side or changes their mind halfway through, the button rolls back to its original position, taking the mask with it.

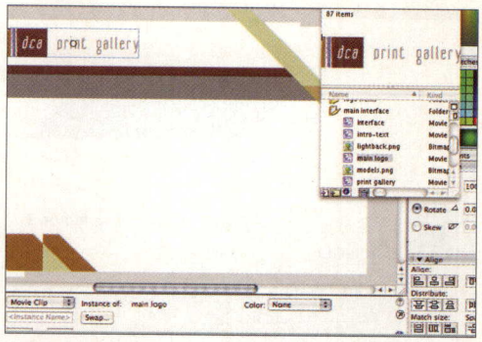
This is the first of two tutorials. The second will see some more exploratory ways of presenting content to users. ■

CREATE AN INTERACTIVE INTERFACE IN FLASH MX 2004



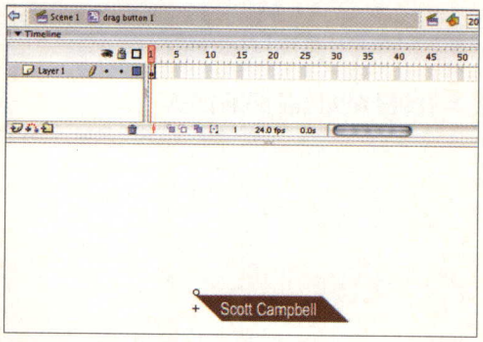
1 OPEN THE PROJECT

Start Flash MX 2004 and open the file dca-start.fla from the cover disc. Double-click layer 1, rename it 'Interface' and now open the library by pressing Control & L. In the Main Interface folder you will find a symbol called 'interface'; drag this to the stage.



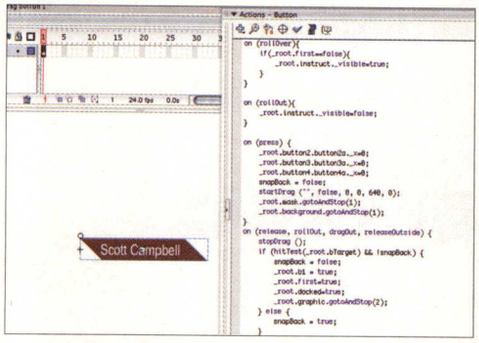
2 POSITION THE GRAPHICS

Select the interface on the stage and position at -33 on the X axis and -34 on the Y axis. From the same folder in the library drag off the Main Logo symbol and position it at 12 on the X axis and 9 on the Y axis in the Properties palette at the bottom of the screen.



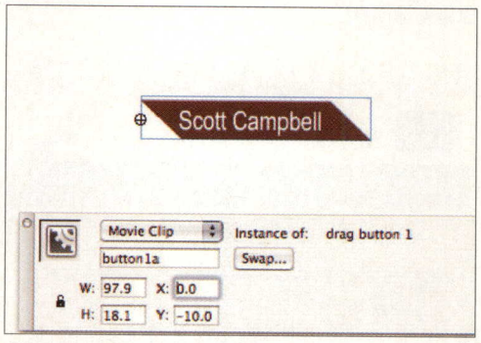
3 CREATE A MOVIE CLIP

Select the Button Objects folder in the library, click the Plus symbol at the bottom left of the library and create a movie clip called 'Drag Button 1'. Drag in the symbol My Button and type the words 'Scott Campbell' on it. In the library drag in the symbol Return Behavior.



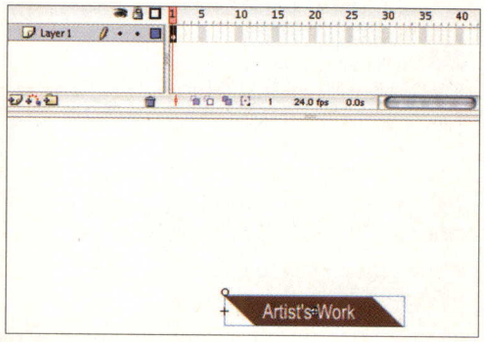
4 ADD THE CODE

The Return Behavior symbol can be positioned anywhere, but make sure the button is positioned at 0 on the X axis. With the button selected, press F9, open the file step4.txt from the cover CD, and copy and paste the code across into the ActionScript editor.



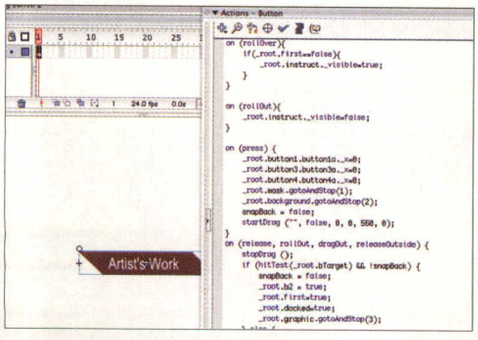
5 A NEW MOVIE CLIP

Create a new movie clip and name it 'Button1-holder'. From the library drag in Drag Button 1, which you just created. Give this the instance name of 'button1a' in the Properties palette and position at 0 pixels on the X axis. Create a new movie clip and name it 'Drag Button 2'.



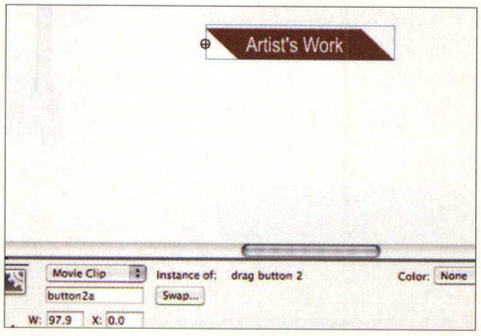
6 ADD THE LABEL

In the new Drag Button 2 movie clip, drag in My Button and position at 0 pixels on the X axis in the Properties palette. Add the text 'Artist's Work', drag in the Return Behavior symbol and position it anywhere on the screen. Select the button and press F9.



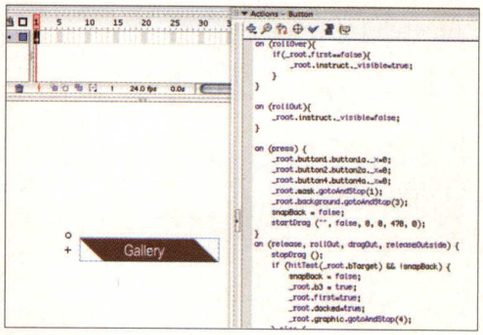
7 ADD THE ACTIONSCRIPT

Open the file step7.txt from the cover CD, and copy and paste the code across into the ActionScript window. Close the ActionScript window and create a new movie clip, naming this 'Button2-holder'. A blank screen will be presented to you.



8 ADD THE LAST MOVIE CLIP

From the library drag in the movie clip Drag Button 2 and give this the instance name of 'button2a', positioning at 0 pixels on the X axis. This is essential for the sliding technique later on. Now create another new movie clip and name this one 'Drag Button 3'.



9 ADD THE ELEMENTS

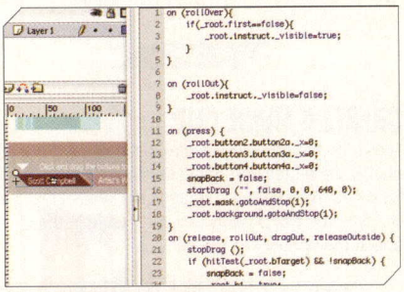
Once again, drag in the My Button symbol from the library. This time position it at 8.7 on the X axis, add the title 'Gallery' with the Text tool and drag in the Return Behavior symbol. Select the button, press F9, open step9.txt from the cover disc and copy the code across.

TUTORIAL: FLASH
CREATE AN INTERACTIVE INTERFACE IN FLASH MX 2004

TECHNIQUE

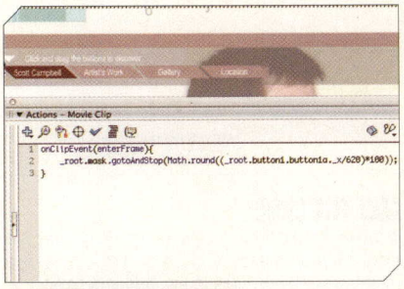
LEARN WHAT THE CODE DOES

A little ActionScript is used in this project to control the behaviour of the buttons, but what does it mean? Don't worry if you're not sure – even seasoned ActionScript users take a while to get into the head of the programmer when they first see the code. Here's an explanation:



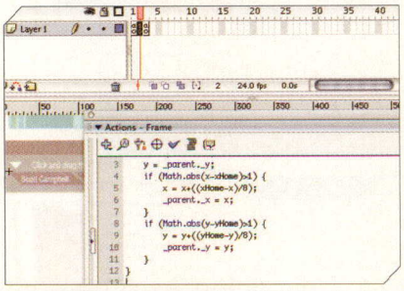
1 ON MOUSE EVENTS

On the button in the Drag Button clips are events for its states. The first two turn the instructions on and off if it's the first rollover. When the mouse is pressed, the drag starts and other buttons are reset. If the button touches the bTarget it stays on the right.



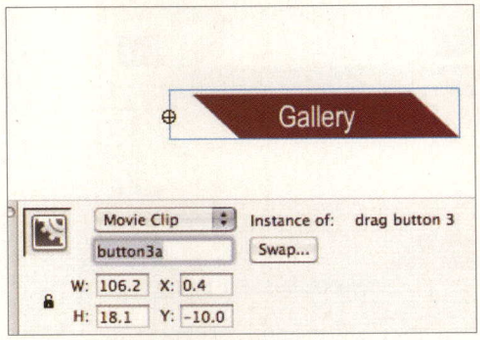
2 PUT IT ON THE SPOT

On the Return Behavior symbol (a white spot) there's some code on this at the end of the tutorial. It works out how far across the screen the button is in pixels, and gives it a percentage. The appropriate mask frame is then played, giving it the movement.



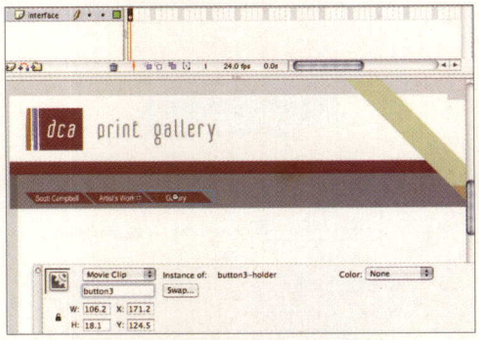
3 RETURN BEHAVIOR

In the Return Behavior clip are three lines of code that return the button to its original position if it doesn't touch the bTarget when it's released. Note how the button slows down the closer it gets to its original position, which is worked out on each frame.



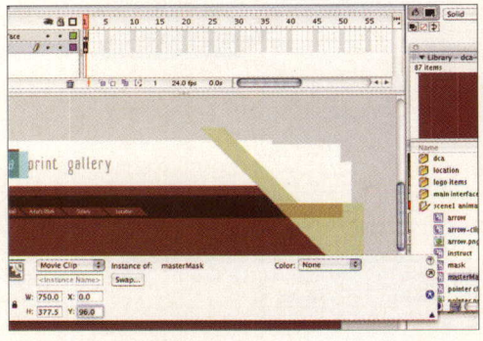
10 A NEW MOVIE CLIP

Create a new movie clip and name this 'Button3-holder'. Now drag in the symbol Drag Button 3 from the library, give it the instance name of 'button3a' and position at 0.4 on the X axis. Create another new movie clip and name this 'drag button 4'.



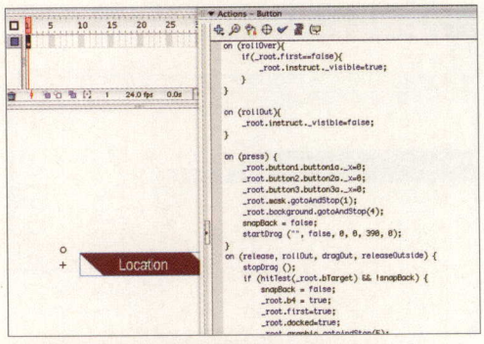
13 ADD BUTTONS TO THE DESIGN

Drag Button1-holder to the stage and position at 9.9 on the Y axis. Drag Button2-holder to the stage and position at 94.8 on the Y axis, aligning with the first button. Drag Button3-holder to the stage and position at 171.2 on the Y axis, aligning as before.



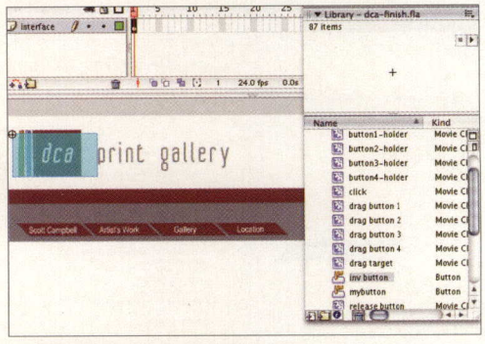
16 POSITION THE CODE

Give the Target symbol the instance name of 'bTarget' and from the Modify menu choose Arrange and Send To Back. Create a new layer and name it 'Mask', moving it below the existing layer. Drag the masterMask symbol from the Scene 1 Animations folder and position on the stage.



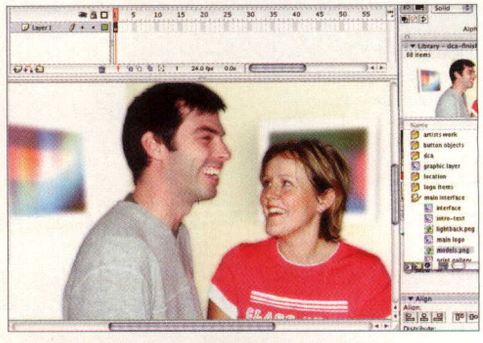
11 ADD THE BUTTON CODE

Drag in the My Button symbol, position at 11.5 on the X axis. Add the label 'Location' with the Text tool and drag in the symbol Return Behavior from the library. Now select the button, press F9 to open the ActionScript editor and open step11.txt, copying and pasting the code across.



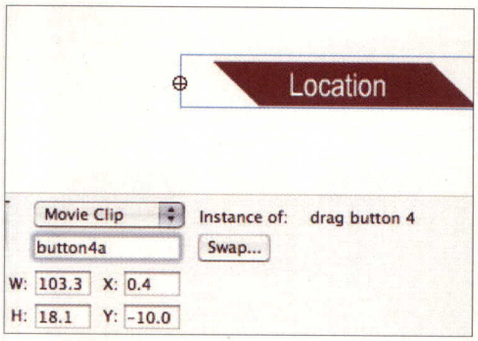
14 INSTANCE NAMES

Drag Button4-holder to the stage and position at 253.2 on the Y axis, aligning with the other buttons. Now give each button from left to right the instance names 'button1', 'button2', 'button3' and 'button4'. Drag Inv Button from the library to the stage and place over the logo.



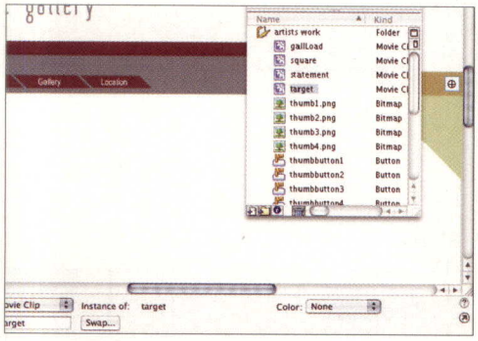
17 CREATE A WELCOME SCREEN

Give the masterMask symbol the instance name of 'mask'. Now create a new movie clip symbol in the library and name it 'Graphic Layer'. Drag in the photo models.png from the Main Interface folder in the library. Position at -375 on the X axis and -205 on the Y axis.



12 LAST BUTTON SYMBOL

Create a new symbol, naming it 'Button4-holder', then drag the symbol Drag Button 4 to the stage, giving it the instance name of 'button4a', and position the button at 0.4 pixels on the X axis. Click on the Scene 1 logo at the top left of Flash to return to the main timeline.



15 ADD CODE TO THE BUTTON

Press F9 to open the ActionScript editor, and now open step15.txt from the cover CD and copy across the code. Close the ActionScript editor and drag the Target symbol from the Artist's Work folder in the library to the stage. Position at x:729 and y:125.8.

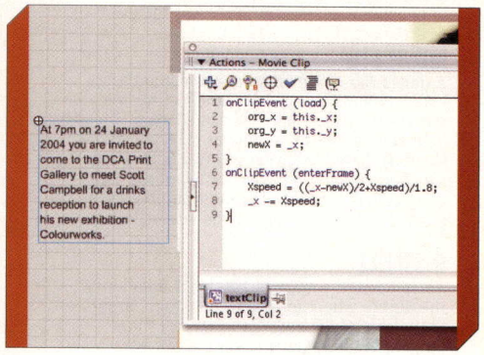
IN DETAIL: ANIMATIONS FROM SCRIPT

Everyone knows how to tween animation between two points, but what about controlling it from script?

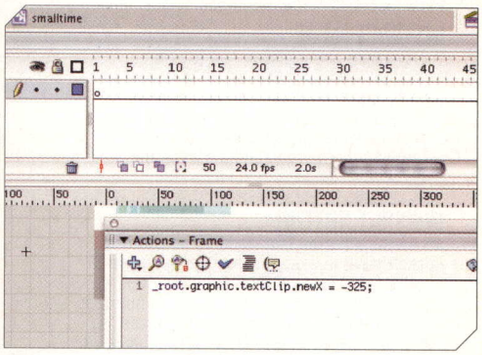
In the Welcome screen is text with a welcome message. This has come from the library and is a movie clip, so it can have code applied. It's easy to set up a motion tween between two keyframes, but a bit messy to nest this in another movie clip with the animation inside so that we can keep it constrained to one frame in the Graphic Layer symbol. Instead it's controlled by ActionScript, which has an advantage. Because it's controlled by the speed of the movement based on how far it has to travel, the animation can be made to behave differently by changing one number.

Look at the code on the textClip symbol in the Graphic Layer symbol. The position of the graphic is grabbed and stored in variables when it's loaded into the memory. This is found in the onClipEvent(load) braces. Inside the onClipEvent(enterFrame) braces, Flash checks to see if the variable newX changes, and if it does, the equation sets up a variable called Xspeed and takes the _x position, being its position on the horizontal axis, and subtracts the newX position. This is divided by two with the Xspeed added on. The whole thing is then divided by 1.8. There's a huge initial movement, which is more than halved next frame, slowing the animation, and so on until it reaches the right position. Because of the frame rate and the value of 1.8, the equation causes the text to overshoot its destination and finally settle in the right position.

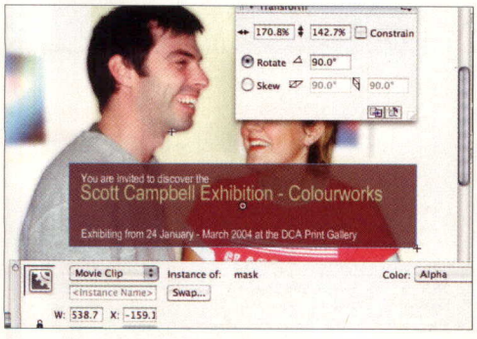
How is this triggered? Look inside the smallTime symbol: the code on the last frame looks on the _root timeline (Scene 1) for a symbol called 'Graphic' and then inside it for a symbol called 'textClip', where it changes the value of newX to its new position. This triggers the animation. ■


Actions – Movie Clip
1 onClipEvent (load) {
2 org_x = this._x;
3 org_y = this._y;
4 newX = _x;
5 }
6 onClipEvent (enterFrame) {
7 Xspeed = ((_x-newX)/2+Xspeed)/1.8;
8 _x -= Xspeed;
9 }
At 7pm on 24 January 2004 you are invited to come to the DCA Print Gallery to meet Scott Campbell for a drinks reception to launch his new exhibition - Colourworks.
textClip
Line 9 of 9, Col 2

■ Set up Flash to check for changes to the newX variable, and you can set your graphic up for sliding action

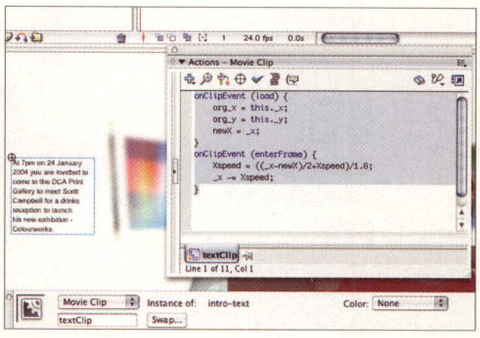


■ And you can now tell Flash to move your graphic a specified amount across the stage, effectively 'sliding' it at your command



18 ADD THE TYPOGRAPHY

Drag in the symbol Mask from the Scene 1 Animations folder in the library. Scale to 170.7% and 142.7%, rotating the graphic 90°, then position at -159.1 on the X axis and 50.5 on the Y axis. Change the alpha colour to 80% and now add the text as shown above with the Text tool.



19 ADD ANIMATED TEXT

From the Main Interface folder in the library, drag intro-text to the stage, position it at -52.7 and -95.5 for the X and Y positions in the Properties palette and give it the instance name 'textClip'. Press F9, open step19.txt and copy the code across to the ActionScript window.

20 A BLANK KEYFRAME

Create a new layer, and with frame 1 selected press F9 and type stop(); in the ActionScript editor. Select your first layer and frame 2, then press F7 to add a blank keyframe. Drag the photo lightback.png to the stage and position at -375 and -205 for the X and Y positions.

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GEEK SPEAK

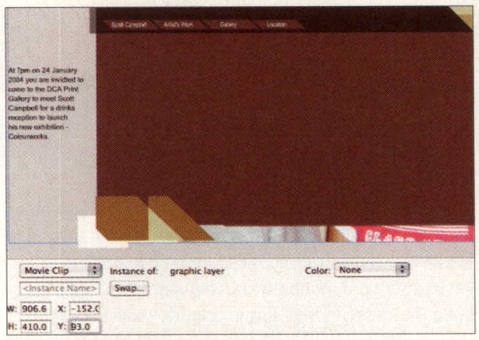
KEYFRAMES
Keyframes are the frames where graphics can be resized and changed on the stage. Once they've been changed, the graphics can be animated, and the change takes place between the differences in the keyframes.

MOVIE CLIP
A movie clip symbol is an animation in the library with its own unique timeline. Adding a movie clip to the stage will play its own animation at the same time as playing back on the main timeline, giving you two animations simultaneously. More importantly, movie clips can have code attached to them so they can react to dynamic situations and interactions.

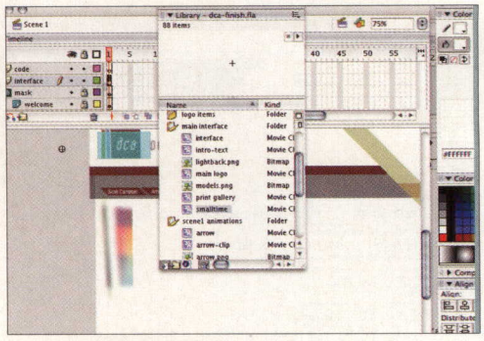
INSTANCE
An instance is a copy of an object found in the library when applied to the stage. It gets the name because it's an instance of the original symbol. Many instances can be added to a Flash movie, while increasing the file size by only a fraction of the amount of totally new graphics.

INSTANCE NAME
The instance name allows you to name individual instances differently, so you can either control them by code or differentiate between them if you're testing for collision detection. The instance names are crucial in controlling the buttons and masks in the dynamic animation.

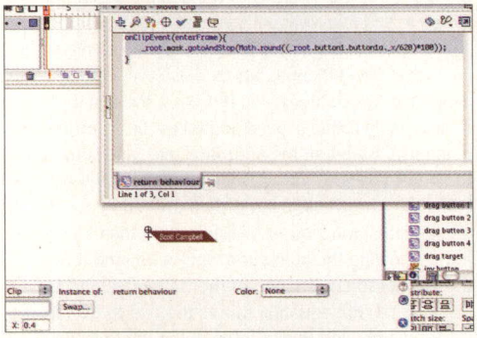
INVISIBLE BUTTON
An invisible button is a standard button that doesn't have any graphics on the up, down or over states. Instead it just has a 'hit' area, which is the area that's clickable. This button is a semi-transparent green when it appears on the stage, but when the Flash file is published it is invisible, allowing any object placed on it to act as a button.



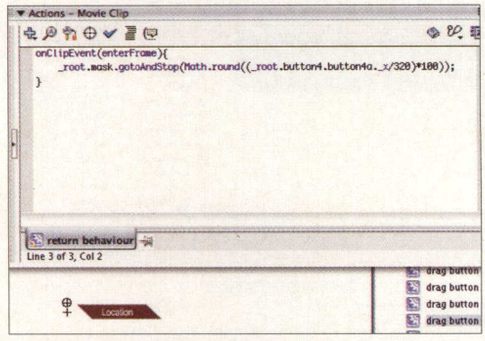
21 POSITION ON THE STAGE
Select frame 5 and press F5 on the keyboard to extend the timeline. Return to Scene 1 and create a new layer; name it 'Welcome' and drag it below the other layers. Drag on the symbol Graphic Layer from the library and position at -152 on the X axis and 93 on the Y axis.



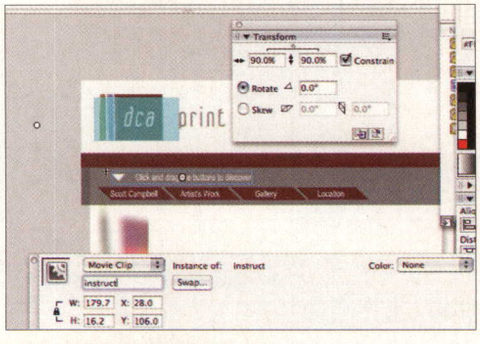
22 A NEW LAYER
Give the Graphic Layer symbol the instance name of 'graphic'. Right-click on the Mask layer and choose Mask from the pop-up menu. Select the Interface layer and drag on the Smalltime symbol from the library. Now create a new layer and name it 'Code', select frame 1 and press F9.



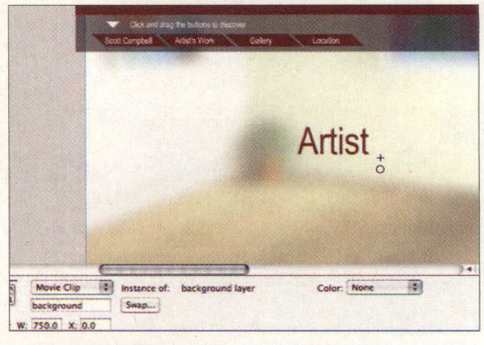
23 ADD CODE TO THE CODE LAYER.
Open step23.txt from the cover CD and copy the code into the ActionScript editor. Double-click Drag Button 1 from the library to edit it, select the white spot Return Behavior symbol on the stage and press F9. Open step23-drag button 1.txt and copy across the ActionScript.



24 MORE CODE TO ADD
Double-click the other Drag Button clips in the library, select the white spot Return Behavior symbol onstage and press F9. Open the appropriate step24-drag button 2.txt, step24-drag button 3.txt and step24-drag button 4.txt, and copy the code into the ActionScript editor.



25 ADD INSTRUCTIONS
From the Scene 1 Animations folder in the library, drag the Instruct symbol to frame 1 of the Interface layer. Scale it down to 90% in the Transform palette and now add the instance name of 'instruct' in the Properties palette. Create a new layer and drag it below the others.



26 LAST STEP
Rename your new layer 'Background'. From the Scene 1 Animations folder in the library drag the Background Layer symbol to frame 1 of the new layer. Give it the instance name 'background' and position it at 0 on the X axis and 92.8 on the Y axis, then save and export the SWF file.

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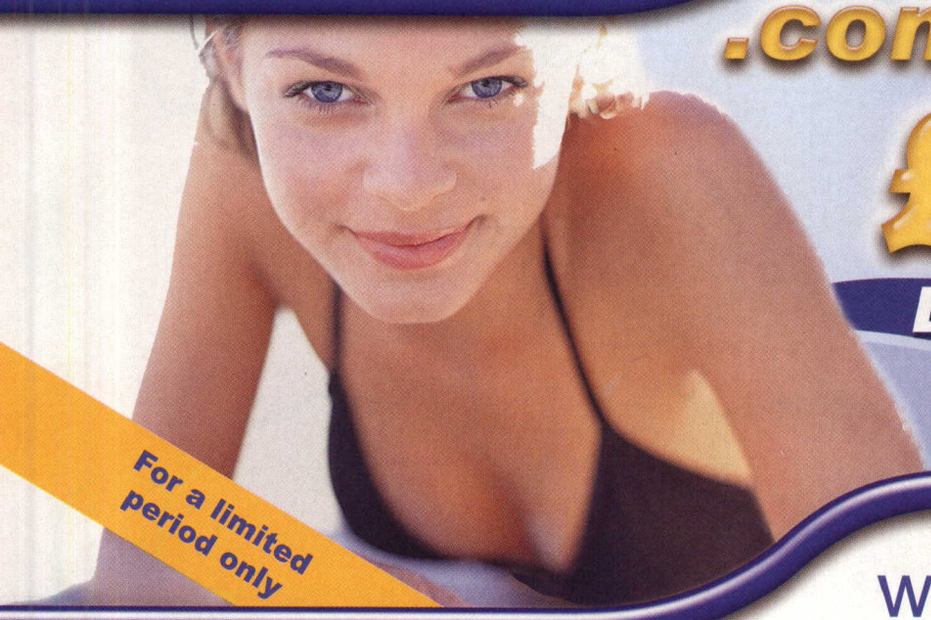

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TUTORIAL: FLASH
CREATE STUNNING WEB ARTWORK IN FLASH MX

THE EXPERT: TADO

Tado is the irrepressable duo of Mike Doney and Katie Tang. They met while studying at Leeds Metropolitan, and only got into the world of illustration and Web design in 2002. Since then, they've been very popular bunnies, and their brand of irreverent comic mayhem has seen them designing everything from site interfaces and magazine covers through to plastic toys. Their application of choice is Flash.

CREATE STUNNING WEB ARTWORK IN FLASH MX

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Experiment with Flash's drawing tools to create exciting characters

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
2-3 hours

ON THE DISC
Flash/ Tutorial files: finished-result.jpg, sketch.jpg

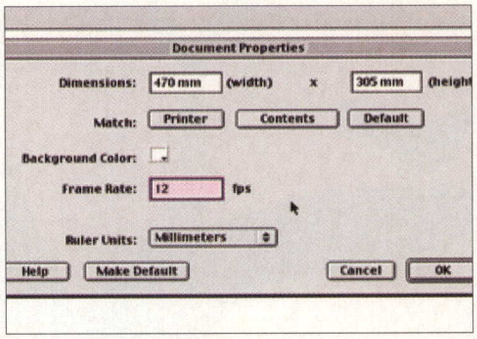
Master Flash's vector drawing tools to create exciting characters and wacky landscapes

Flash is most famous as an animation program and for its ability to create interactive and rich content. The application is far less known for its drawing capabilities – often designers create graphics in applications like Illustrator and then import them into Flash if they are to be used for Web purposes. In this tutorial we look at a different way of working, using the app's own comprehensive range of drawing tools to create an illustration directly in Flash.

Since Flash MX was introduced, the program has featured a powerful and comprehensive range of vector drawing tools that behave in a unique way, combining elements of traditional vector-based applications such as Illustrator and Freehand with elements of bitmap apps like Photoshop. Creating images directly in Flash allows the user to produce scalable visual elements that are perfectly suited to use in the Flash player on the Web, but can also be exported in both vector and bitmap formats for print.

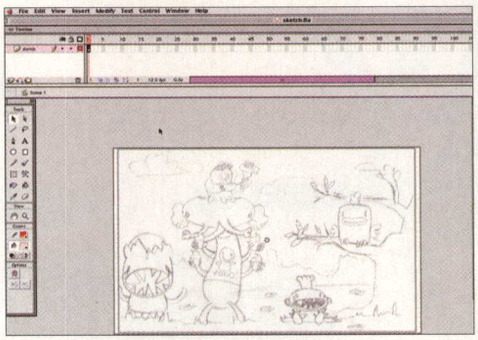
In this tutorial we'll look at using Flash's drawing tools to create a character based on a sketch, starting with the basics and moving on to some more advanced techniques and tips. ■

TUTORIAL: FLASH
CREATE STUNNING WEB ARTWORK IN FLASH MX



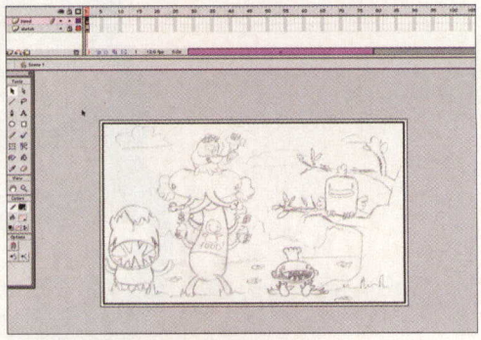
1 SET UP YOUR DOCUMENT

We have used Flash MX for this tutorial, but the same techniques can be used in Flash 5 and MX 2004. Once you have a new document, select Modify>Document. Change the Ruler Units to Millimeters, and set the Document Dimensions to 470x305. Hit OK.



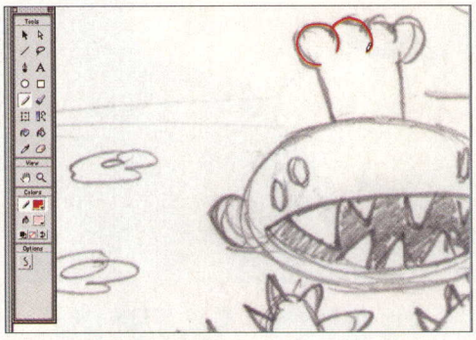
2 IMPORTING A SKETCH

Select Modify>Layer and name the layer 'Sketch'. Click File, Import, then select the file sketch.jpg from the Tutorial folder on the cover disc. Adjust the picture until it sits centrally onstage. Lock this layer on the timeline at the top of the screen. Click the Insert Layer icon; name the new layer 'Bleed'.



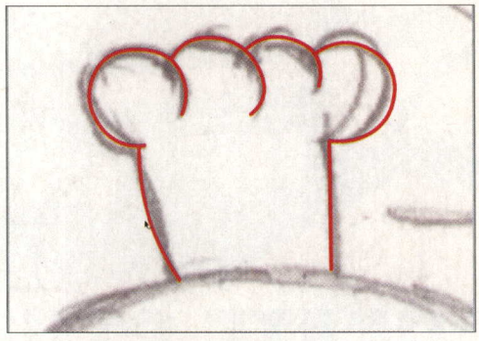
3 SETTING THE BLEED

On the Bleed layer, use the Rectangle to draw a box on the main stage of 460x295mm. Switch to the Arrow; select and delete the box's fill. Select the rectangle outline, then Modify>Group. Place the shape roughly centre stage allowing a bleed of 5mm on all sides. Lock this layer on the timeline.



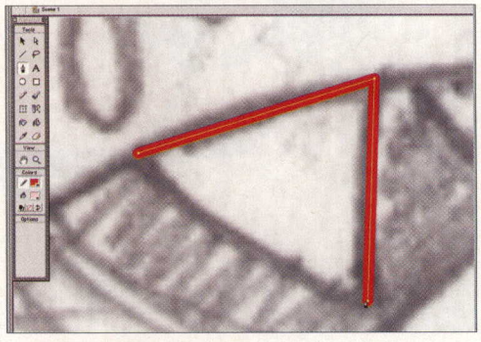
5 PENCIL TOOL

The Pencil tool's ideal for drawing irregular or complex shapes; it simply draws a line and doesn't fill. To make tracing easier, select a clearly visible colour and a line weight of 1.5. At the bottom of the toolbar are the options: Ink, Smooth and Straight. For basic drawing we recommend Smooth or Ink.



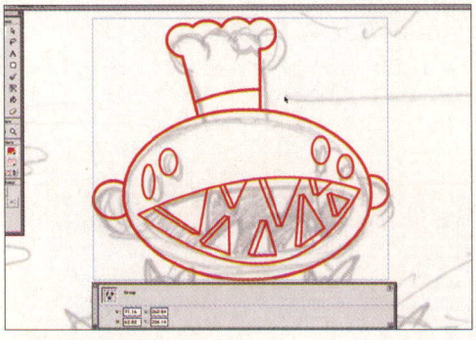
6 CHARACTER OUTLINE

You now want to trace the outline and should have no fills. Lines can be selected by clicking: press Shift and click or drag the mouse to select multiple lines. Alter individual lines by selecting the Arrow and hovering beside the line. When the cursor changes, click and drag the line to make adjustments.



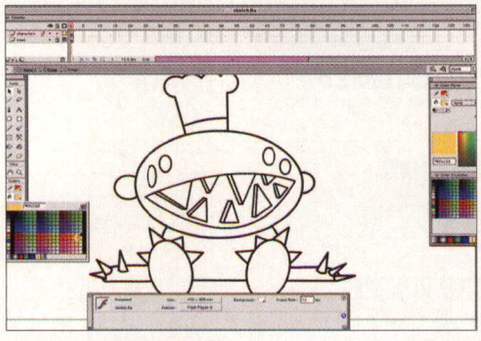
7 PEN TOOL

For more refined curves, experiment with the Pen tool or the Line tool. The Pen tool comes in handy for smooth lines with several curves. Select the tool, click to create a start point, then create a second point at the end of the curve holding down the mouse button. Move the mouse to adjust the curve.



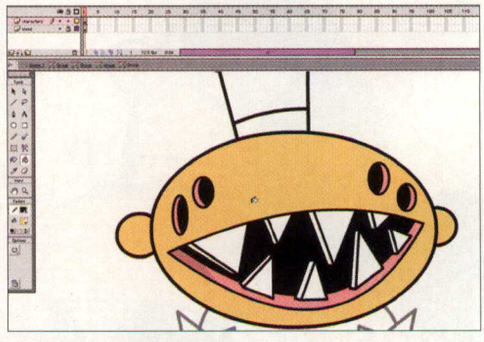
9 USING GROUPS

As you complete each section, use Modify>Group to group the parts together. This lets you make easy adjustments to the character's pose. To break a group apart, select it and hit Modify>Break. You can work inside the group by double-clicking the object, and can also have groups within groups.



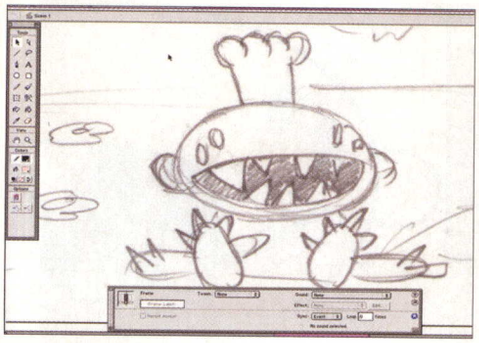
10 ADD COLOUR

Once you've traced the outlines of your character and grouped up the individual body parts, it's time to delete the Sketch layer and start adding colour. Choose a group and double-click to work within it. Select the Paint Bucket tool in the toolbar and choose an appropriate colour



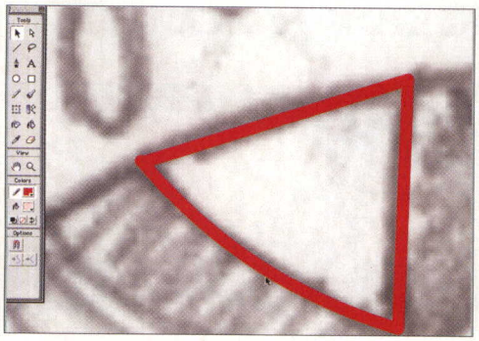
11 FIND THE GAP

Flash fills the same way as Photoshop, ie it fills closed shapes. You should be able to just click and fill in an area, but Flash can be awkward and won't always fill what seems to be a closed shape – usually because of a tiny gap between two points. Use the Show Layers as Outlines tool to find any gaps.



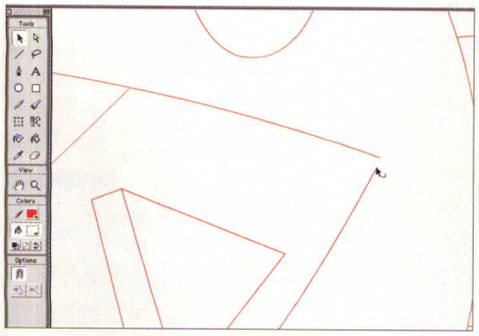
4 BEGIN TO DRAW

Create a new layer named 'Characters'. Click the Arrow tool and ensure the Magnet tool at the bottom of the toolbar is deselected. Choose a character to trace. There are no rules on creating shapes in Flash – over the next steps we'll look at freehand drawing with the Pencil, Pen, Line and Shape tools.



8 PEN AND LINE TOOLS

Once you're happy, simply click further on to create the next point in the curve. This tool is very similar to the Pen tools in other vector apps. Another way of creating smooth lines is to use the Straight-line tool, then use the Arrow tool to create curves by pulling the line.



12 CLOSING GAPS

The easiest way to close gaps is to use the Arrow tool. Turn the Magnet function on and click the end of the line you wish to join. Hold down the mouse and move the line around; it automatically connects to the nearest line. Once you're sure you've closed all gaps, you should be able to fill in your shapes.

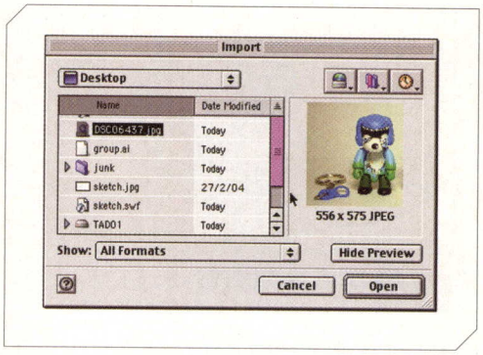
IN DETAIL: TRACE BITMAP TOOL

Use the Trace Bitmap tool in Flash to create vector images that think they're pixels!

When you've imported a bitmap into Flash, you can fiddle around with the Trace Bitmap tool to create some interesting results. Trace Bitmap basically creates a vectored version of your bitmap image, which then allows you to manipulate it just like any other vector image in Flash.

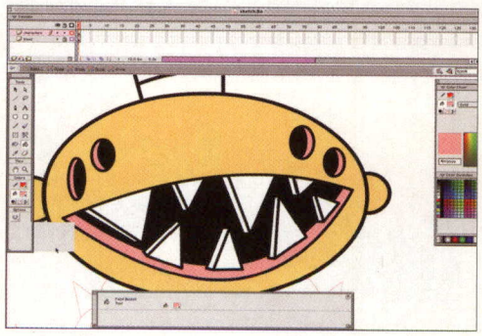
The technique works best with something like a 72-dpi JPEG. Choose File>Import and select your image. Flash may ask you to import via QuickTime, in which case click Yes. Once the image is on the main stage, select it and choose Modify>Trace Bitmap. You can then mess around with the Color Threshold, Minimum Pixels, Curve Fit and Corner Threshold. Altering these will greatly affect how the image looks. As a rough guide, the more colours, corners and curves, the more the image will look like the original bitmap, but this will create a larger file and make Flash work harder. Once the image has been traced you can treat it as a normal Paint Bucket fill. You can outline parts, stretch it, delete individual parts, or select it all and make it one fill colour. Trace Bitmap is handy for a lot of techniques, eg creating a stylised photo-realistic vectored portrait, an interesting cloud-filled sky or a texture unachievable with conventional vectors.

One thing to be wary of when using traced images is their suitability for Web use. Tracing an image with many corners, in full colour and tight curves will produce a big file that the Flash player may struggle to animate. If the image is going to be static, it's better to use an optimised bitmap image to keep the file size down and prevent the player working too hard. For fast-moving animation, keep the curve and corner numbers as low as possible. ■



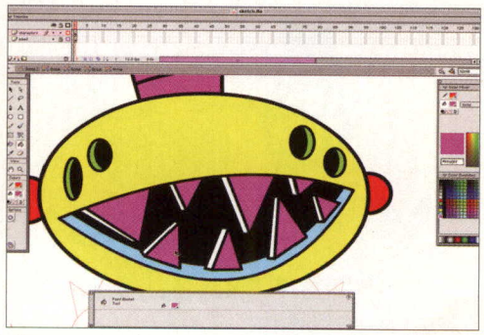
■ Simply scan your hard drive for the JPEG you want to import to Flash, then click on Open. With a bit of careful tweaking...

■ ...you can quickly end up with a fully editable vector version of your original JPEG. Watch out for massive file sizes, though



13 ADJUST THE PAINT BUCKET

Another useful tip for filling in is to adjust the Paint Bucket tool's settings. You can set the tool to fill different sized gaps, allowing you a quick bodge if you can't be bothered to check all your lines!



14 COLOUR COMBOS

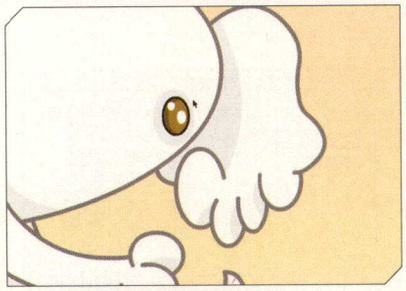
Experiment with different colour combinations for your character. You can mix custom colours from the Color Mixer drop-down menu or in the Swatches panel. Remember, it's often better to be subtle than sorry!

TUTORIAL: FLASH
CREATE STUNNING WEB ARTWORK IN FLASH MX

TECHNIQUE

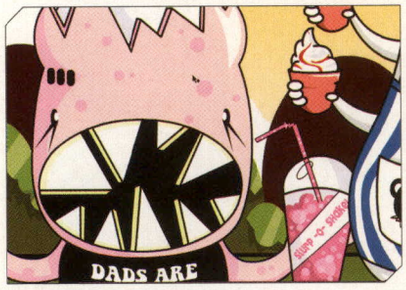
GIVE YOUR CHARACTERS THAT EXTRA SPARKLE!

Tips to make your characters come to life



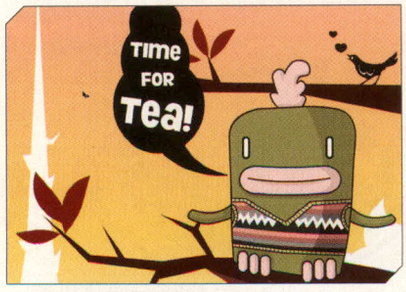
1 THE GLINT IN THE EYES

There are several tips for adding that special touch to your characters – and the first is the classic white highlight in the eyes. Simply add a white dot to the pupil to create a cheeky glint and instant life. Make sure you make the highlights face the same way or your character may end up a bit boz-eyed!



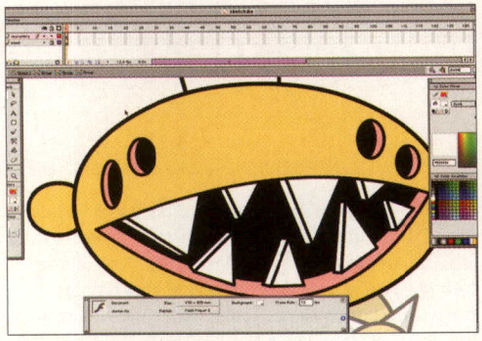
2 SKIN TEXTURE

You can give the impression of skin texture by using subtle colours and patterns on the skin's surface. For example, here you can see this gentleman has a 'corned beef' complexion! The subtle circles give the impression of an uneven surface.



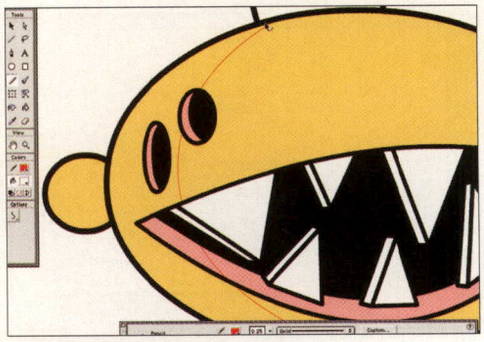
3 SPEECH BUBBLES

Giving your characters speech bubbles or symbols can be a fun way of bringing communication into the piece. Simple speech bubbles can be created using the Circle and Pencil tools. Try experimenting – maybe using a symbol in the bubble instead of text, or changing the colour of the bubble. The bubbles themselves add an interesting graphical element.



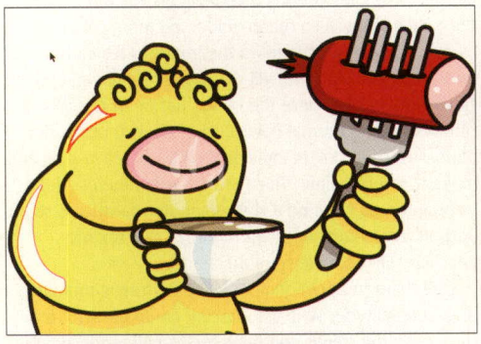
15 GIVE HIM A LIFT

Once you have coloured your character using flat colours, you'll want to add some shading and highlights to lift him off the page slightly. This is the final stage of drawing. Select one part of your character and double-click to work inside the group.



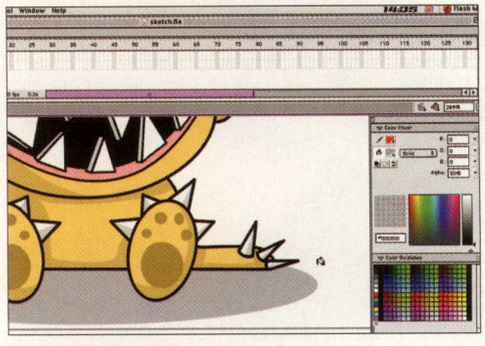
16 SHADING

To create shading, first decide which areas of the body will be in shadow, eg side of the head or under an arm – think about which parts overlap or stick out! It'll help to look at real objects. Once you've decided, select the Pencil tool and pick a bright colour. Set the line weight to .25 in the Properties panel.



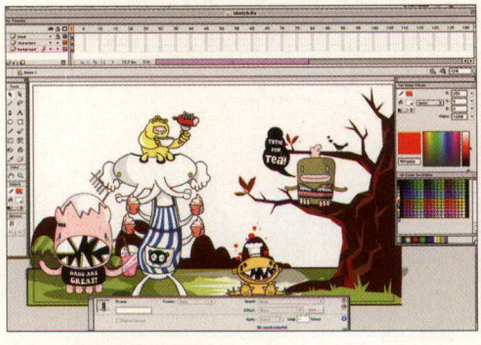
19 CREATING HIGHLIGHTS

Creating highlights is simply the opposite of shading. Again, work out the areas that would catch the light (sticking-out bits like noses, joints, etc) and use a thin pencil line to draw a small area. Fill this with a lightish shade. (We've used a different character here to show you how it works.)



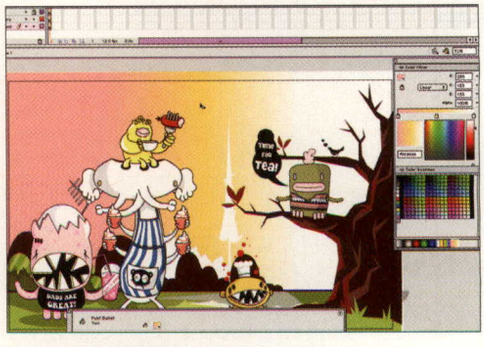
20 SHADOWS

Shadows add weight to characters and make them sit on the page correctly. You can easily create the illusion of 3D shadows with the Color Mixer. Roughly sketch the shape of the shadow, then fill it in solid black. Select the fill and reduce the opacity using the Color Mixer. Now delete the outline. Super!



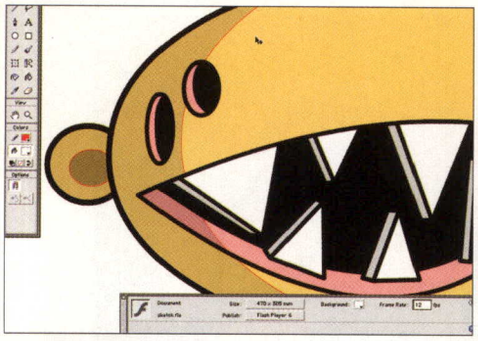
23 BACKGROUND

First add some ground. Create a new layer under the Character layer and name it 'Background'. Choose a nice green, set down the grass and group it – it should take up 1/5th of the page. This gives the impression of depth. Now you can add simple elements, using the usual tricks to create shadows etc.



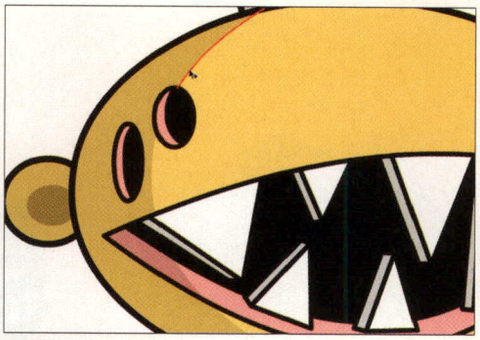
24 GRADIENTS

The sky's made up of a three-colour gradient. First draw a rectangle with a fill on the Background layer that fills the sky. Select the fill; pick Linear in the Color Mixer. The sky changes to black and white. You can now select colours for the gradient. To add another colour click on the line between two colours.



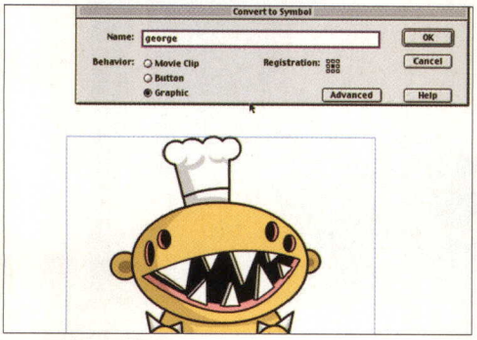
17 MARKING IN THE SHADED AREAS

You now have to draw in where you want the shade to be. Make sure your thin line crosses over the fatter ones, so there aren't any gaps. Once you have sketched in the lines, mix a darker colour and use the Paint Bucket tool to fill in the shading.



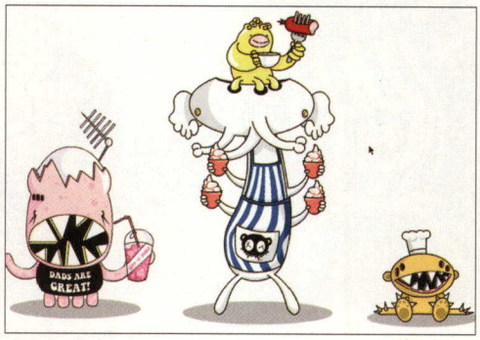
18 FILL THE SHADE

Once you have completed the task of filling in the colour, double-click on the thin line with the Arrow tool. This should select the whole line and then delete it. Voila! Super shading!



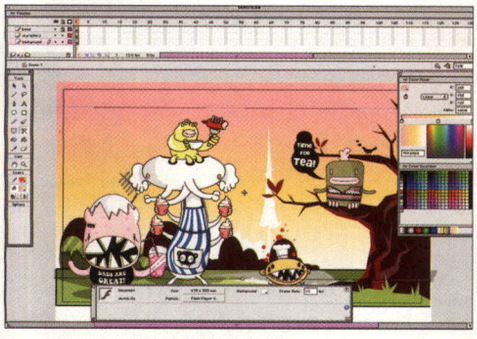
21 CREATING SYMBOLS

Having finished drawing your character, convert him to a symbol. Symbols let you create multiples of an item which are automatically scaled in proportion without having to mess with line widths etc. To create a symbol, select all his parts, go to Insert, Convert to Symbol, Graphic, and give him a name.



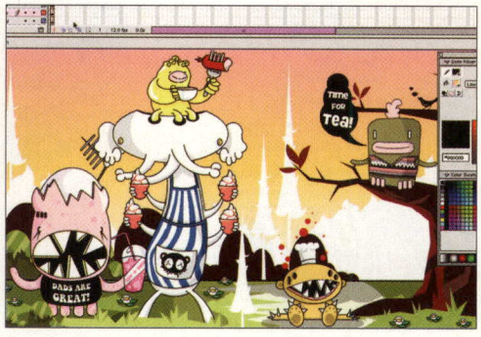
22 COMPOSITION

Once you have drawn up all your characters and converted them to symbols, you can start thinking about how you will use them. Since this tutorial is all about drawing, we will create a simple backdrop for them.



25 TRANSFORMING GRADIENTS

Adjust the gradient angle and size using the Fill Transform tool in the toolbar. Simply click on the fill then use the handles to adjust it. Once you are happy with your sky, you can begin to add details such as clouds, which are created using the Circle tool.



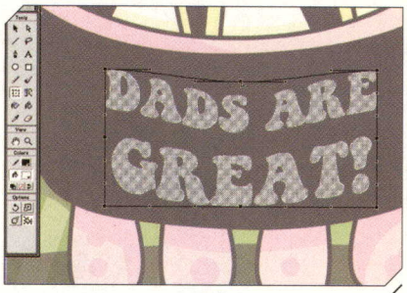
26 FINAL TOUCHES

The final part is adding details. Create a new layer and name it 'Foreground'. This should be ABOVE the Character layer. Now add finishing touches like grass details and flowers – you can enhance the depth by covering the feet of the characters slightly. Again, this helps them sit comfortably on the page.

EXPERT ADVICE

FIDDLING WITH THE TEXT

Text in Flash can be broken down into objects, allowing you infinite fiddling opportunities! Start with some normal text. Select it, then select Modify>Break, and again Modify>Break. The text should turn into a normal ungrouped fill, and you can now pull it around using the Free Transform tool in the toolbar. By selecting the Envelop or Distort tools in the Transform menu (at the bottom of the toolbar) you can pull individual points to squish, squint, bulge or squash the text however you wish.



YOUR NEXT MOVE

CAREFUL USE OF THE LIBRARY

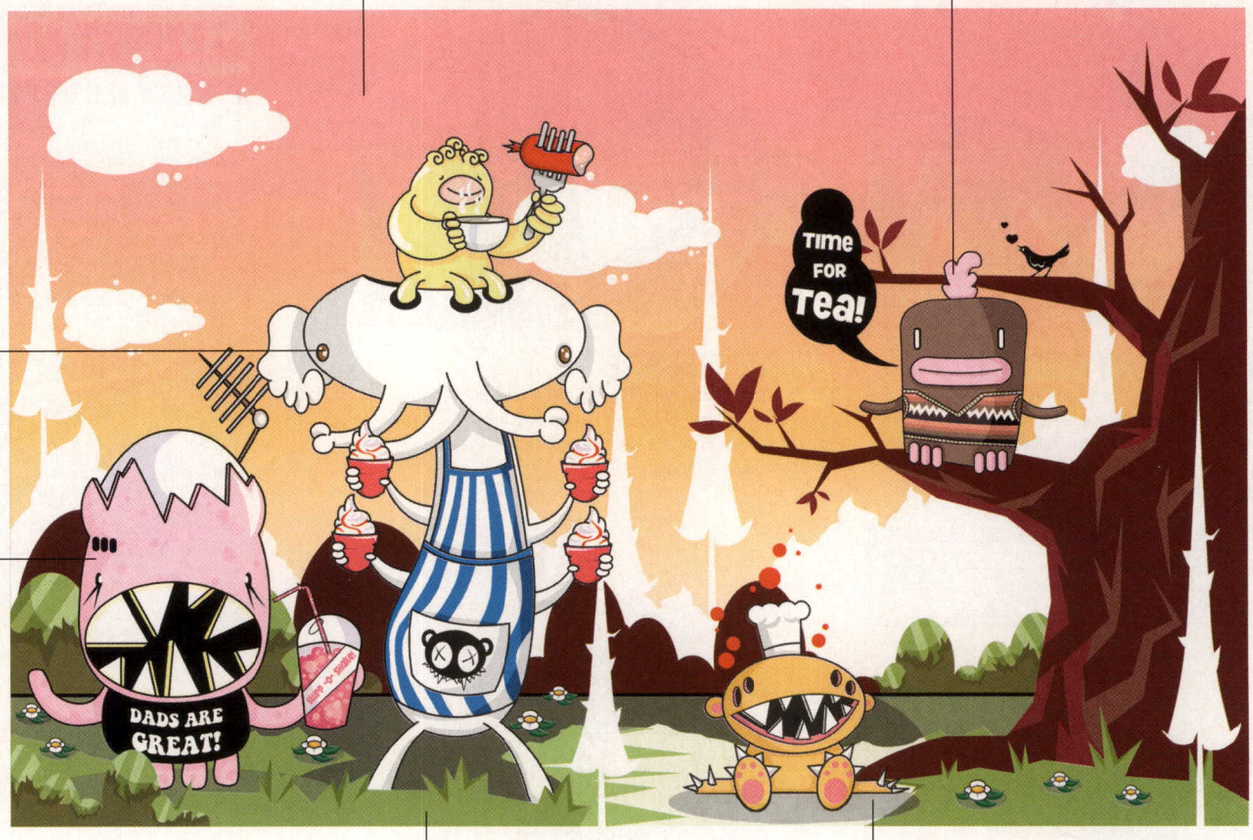
Now you've finished your piece, you will have a library full of useful characters. These can be used again and again within Flash and have a multitude of uses. For example, because we created the characters using grouped body parts, you could start to experiment with animating the characters, moving the separate parts independently. Following on from this you could use them to create interactivity in your movies, such as an animated character-button-based home page. By converting each character to a button you can create a fun, animated navigation system. If you feel technically confident, the other obvious direction would be using the characters in a Flash game. Alternatively, you can also export the characters out to Illustrator etc, to use them as elements in other work.

TUTORIAL: FLASH
CREATE STUNNING WEB ARTWORK IN FLASH MX

Adding a sparkle
The classic 'Glint in the eye' trick gives characters a sparkle. Remember not to make them boz-eyed though!

Gradients
Gradients are used for the sky, and adjusted using the Gradient Adjustment tool. As a general rule, the darkest colour should be at the top of the gradient, the lightest at the bottom

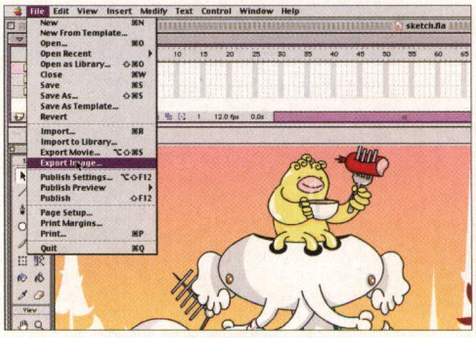
Colours
Remember to think about the colours within the piece. Try and restrict your palette to a few main, complementary colours. For best results always try and mix your own

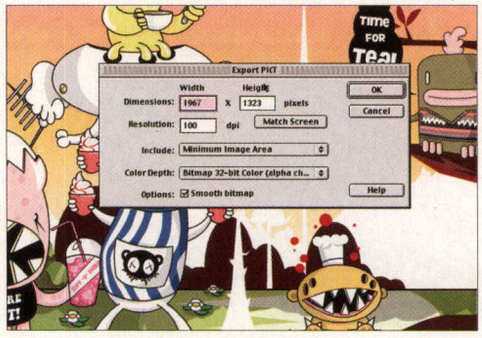


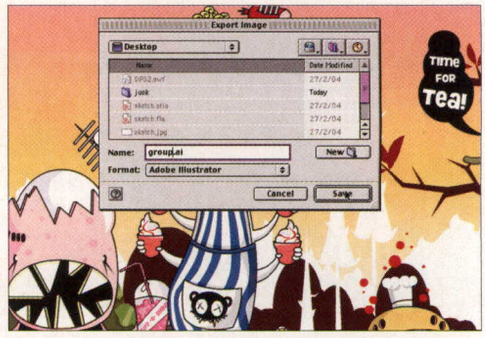
Shading
Shading is created by marking out areas with a fine line, then mixing and filling with a darker colour. Highlights are produced the same way

Experiment
Experiment with different landscapes and backgrounds for your characters. Perhaps try a simpler, more graphic approach for a 'poster' look

Shadows
Shadows create an illusion of depth within the piece. Use the Color Mixer to lower the alpha on the fill to around 40%







27 EXPORTING YOUR IMAGE
Delete the Bleed layer. Once you're happy, you can export the piece. To create a JPEG, hit File>Export Image. Choose .jpg in the pull-down, Full Document in the Size field, quality 100, 100dpi. Once exported, open the file in Photoshop, then scale as needed.

28 EXPORTING FOR PRINT
If you wish to use your piece for print, you now have two options. You can either take the piece out as a bitmap, using the same technique as above but with a higher dpi and saving it as a tiff, pict or high quality .jpg, or you can export to Illustrator.

29 EXPORTING TO ILLUSTRATOR
Exporting to Illustrator allows you greater control over colours etc, once in Illustrator. However, one small qualm with using Flash for print is that when it exports to Illustrator it swaps the colours to CMYK. This usually means they'll have to be tweaked slightly in Illustrator to ensure they print correctly.

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HOW TO USE IMAGE MASKS IN PAINT SHOP PRO 8

THE EXPERT: MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, and has been a regular contributor to *Practical Internet Web Designer* for many issues. Although Mark comes from a print background – he's a former designer of *PI* – he is now much more involved in Web design technology, and specialises in everything from Flash through to 3D graphics and PHP.

Alpha masks
These shapes were created in Paint Shop Pro, and turned into Alpha masks for easier editing

Background
The space to the left of the girl is added separately to give the image more impact

Ever decreasing circles
The circles were imported into Paint Shop Pro. A simple tweak of the layer opacity gave us this eerie effect

Text
With the rest of the image sorted, we add some textual links to complete the home page

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Creating Web page graphics using masks in PSP 8

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
45 minutes

ON THE DISC
Paint Shop Pro/ Tutorial files: blue-girl.tif, dark skies.tif, lines3d.tif, masks.pspimage

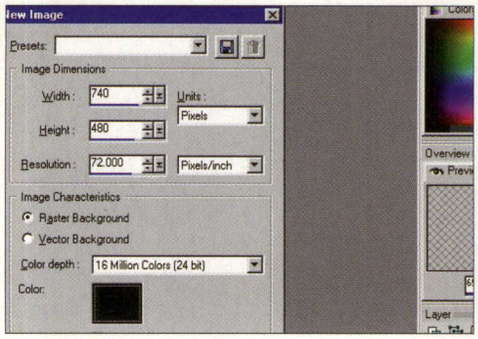
HOW TO USE IMAGE MASKS IN PAINT SHOP PRO 8

The versatility of PSP 8's masks means you can now create smooth blends and fades for your Web graphics. Here's how...

A mask has a specific function – to hide all or part of the face – and most people at some time or another have worn one for fun. The annoying thing is that the holes you're supposed to look and breathe through are usually in the wrong place and never quite fit. Fortunately, masks in Paint Shop Pro work a lot better than the dodgy ones for sale on the promenade!

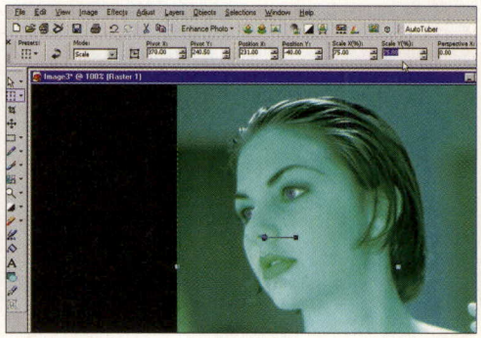
PSP's masks follow the same principle as the simple face mask – they conceal all or part of an image. Usually you only want to hide part of an image, and this is where PSP flexes its muscles. It not only lets parts of an image be visible or invisible, but also gives you the option of varying the levels of opacity. This means you can create custom fades between layers, or Web navigation bars that fade into the page at the edges. You can also hide all details around the main subject in a photo. The advantage of using a mask instead of erasing the details is that if you change your mind the mask can be deleted or saved for later use, and your layer will be just as it was.

HOW TO USE IMAGE MASKS IN PAINT SHOP PRO 8



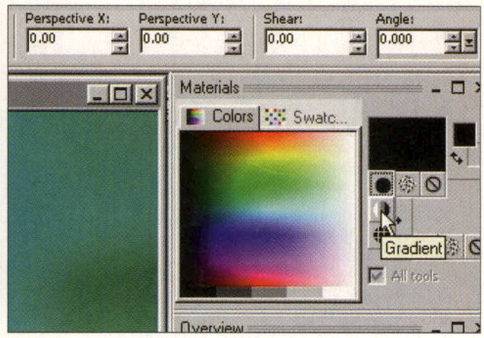
1 A NEW DOCUMENT

Open Paint Shop Pro 8 and create a new document by pressing Control & C on the keyboard. Make the document 740x480 pixels at 72 pixels per inch resolution. Click on the background colour and change the colour to black, then click OK to create the new document.



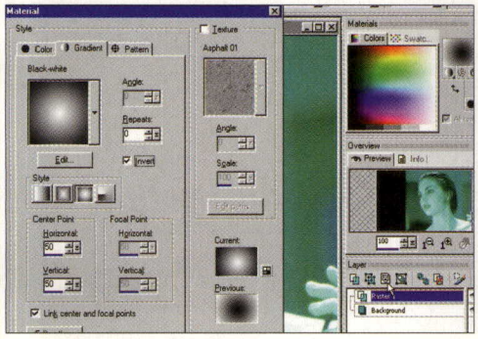
2 COPY AND PASTE

From the cover CD, open the image blue-girl.tif, press Control & A to select all, then click on the new document and press Control & L to paste the girl into that image. Using the toolbar, click on the Deform tool and scale the image down to 75% in the X and Y fields above the image.



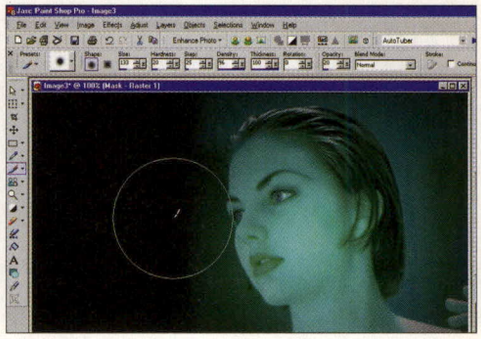
3 CHANGE COLOURS

Make sure the foreground colour is set to Black and the background colour is Light Grey in the Materials palette, by clicking on them and selecting a new colour from the Color Chooser. Now click and hold down the mouse over the Color tab and select Gradient instead.



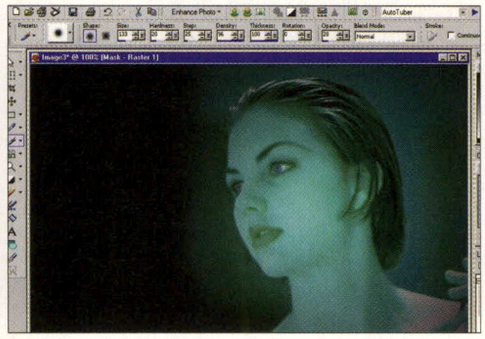
4 GRADIENT OPTIONS

Double-click inside the foreground colour to access the Gradient options. Click on the Invert option and change the style to the Sunburst gradient. Make sure that the Texture checkbox is turned off, and click OK. In the Layer palette, click the Show Mask option (the icon resembling a mask).



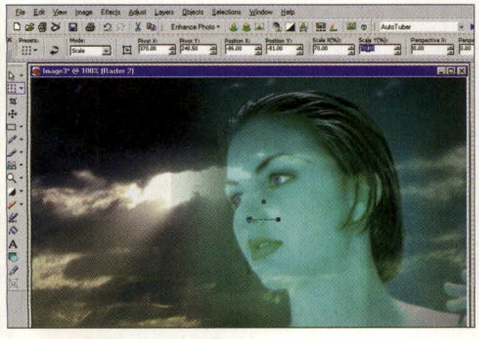
5 FLOOD FILL

Move the girl's face to the centre, then use the Flood Fill tool (the paint pot icon) to apply a soft radial gradient mask to the image. It still has a hard edge, so move the image back to the right and use a soft edge paintbrush with black as the foreground colour to add to the mask.



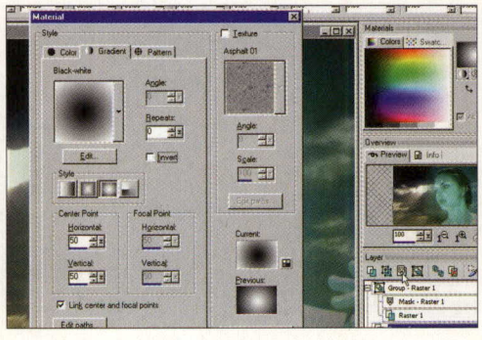
6 MASKED OUT

You will need to change the gradient back to Color on the Materials palette to paint out the left-hand edge. Eventually, using a soft brush, your image will have a soft edge on the left where it meets the black background colour. Now open dark-skies.tif from the cover CD.



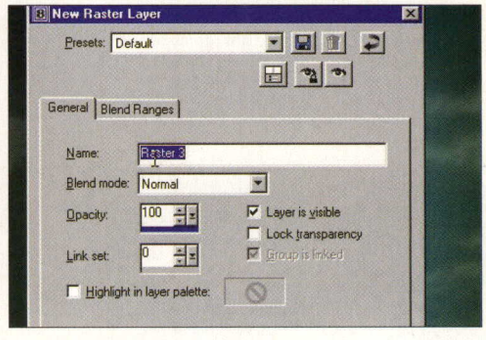
7 SELECT AND COPY

Press Control & A to select all, then press Control & C to copy the selection to the clipboard. You can close dark-skies.tif and select the background in the composition. Press Control & L to paste the sky onto a new layer behind the girl. Use the Deform tool again to scale the image, this time to 70%.



8 ANOTHER GRADIENT

Change the Color option back to a gradient in the Materials palette, and click the gradient to bring up the Gradient options as before. This time make sure that the Invert option is unchecked and press OK. Click on Show Mask to add a mask to this layer.



9 APPLY THE GRADIENT

Click on the Flood Fill tool and then on the image to apply the gradiated mask. This time the centre is masked out, giving emphasis to the face on the layer above. Now click on the New Raster Layer option in the Layers palette and a pop-up window will appear.

TUTORIAL: PAINT SHOP PRO

HOW TO USE IMAGE MASKS IN PAINT SHOP PRO 8

GEEK SPEAK

SELECT ALL

This process is the easy way to select an entire image in one easy shortcut: Control & A. The image can then be moved, or more likely copied, so that it can be pasted into a new layer or image.

SCALE X AND Y

The scaling process for layers is done through the use of the Deform tool, which has a whole group of options above the image. Images can be scaled proportionally in two directions, X being left to right and Y being up and down. Images can also be scaled disproportionately on one axis only, causing the image to squash.

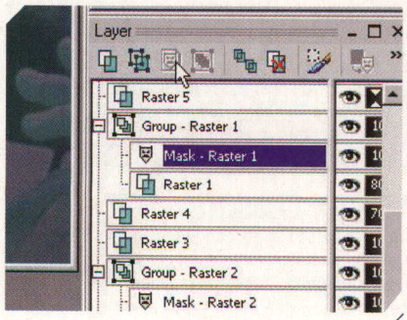
GRADIENT

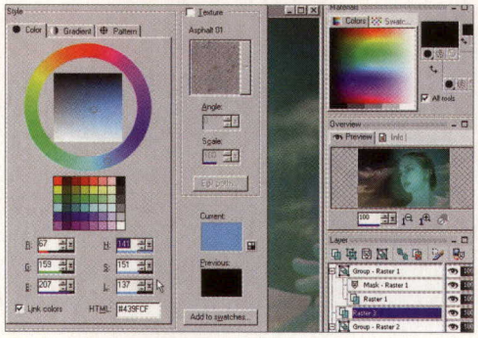
A gradient is a blend between two different colours or shades. The blend is a smooth transition between the two points and is useful for creating soft masks. Gradients can be 'Linear' which means they run along a line, 'Sunburst' in a circle, or 'Rectangular'.

EXPERT ADVICE

LAYER MASKS

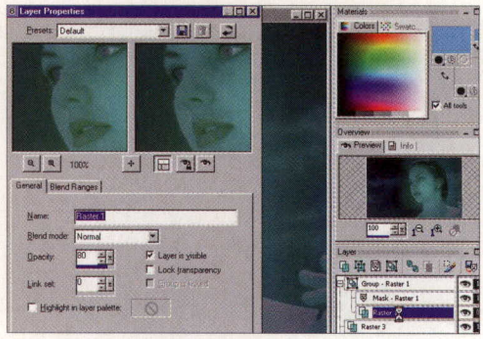
Any layer can have a mask applied to it by clicking on the Mask icon in the Layer palette. A mask is like a greyscale image, ie an image with tonal values from white to black excluding colour. Any white area of the mask is visible but any black area of the image is removed. The advantage of using masks is that it's very easy to create blends between two layers, as we have done in this tutorial. It's also useful, as we are not removing any part of the image, so the layer remains intact without erasing any part of it to get transparency. If you change your mind later, all you have to do is remove the mask to get your layer back.





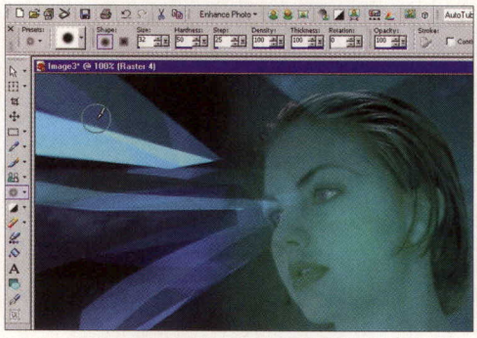
10 LAYER OPTIONS

Change the blend mode from Normal to Soft Light and click OK. Now change the gradient back to Color in the Materials palette and click the foreground colour to change it. In the pop-up window choose a light blue then click OK and select the Flood Fill tool, clicking on the image to apply.



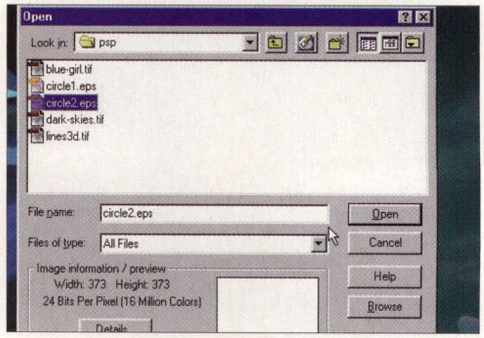
11 OPACITY CHANGE

Double-click on the Sky layer, change the opacity to 30% as the clouds are too harsh, and then click OK. Double-click on the Girl layer and change its opacity to 80%, clicking OK to apply. Select the light blue layer and then open the file lines3d.tif from the cover CD.



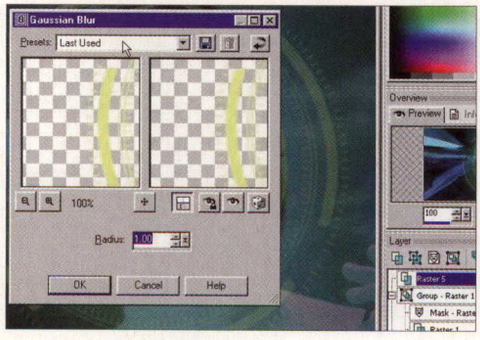
14 BLURRING THE EDGES

Click the Dodge tool on the toolbar, holding down the mouse button. Now select the Soften brush from the drop-down list. In the top left-hand corner, paint over the corner of the blue lines layer and repeat this a few times until it starts to become a little blurred.



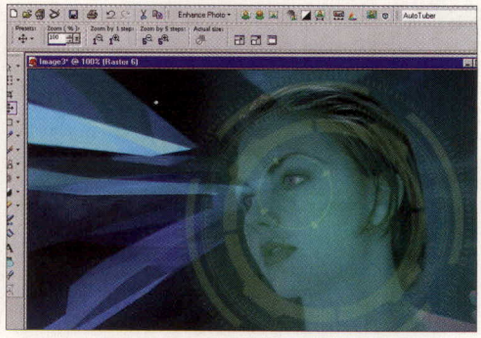
15 PLACE ARTWORK

We are going to place some EPS (Encapsulated Postscript) artwork into our image. This has been created in a dedicated vector drawing package like Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw or Macromedia FreeHand. Choose Open from the File menu and choose Circle 2 from the cover CD.



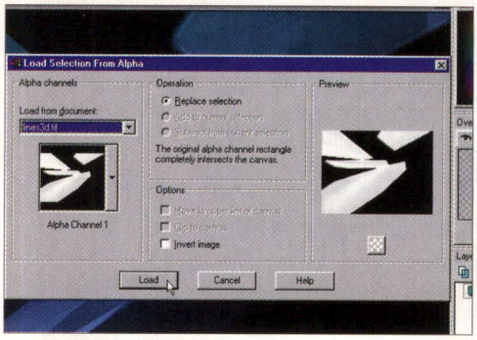
18 LAYER OPTIONS

The circle is far too bright, so double-click the layer and change the blend mode to Lighten, reduce the opacity to 15% and click OK. Now go to the Adjust menu and choose Blur and Gaussian blur. Apply a 1-pixel blur to the Circle layer to take the focus off this layer.



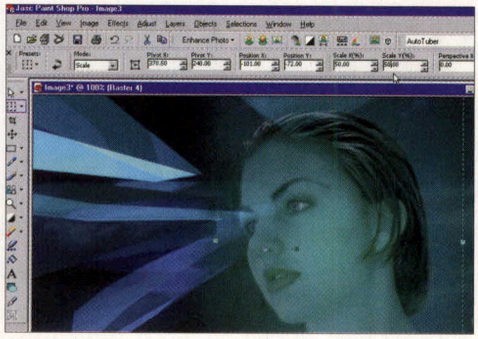
19 CIRCLE 1

Now open circle1.eps at a scale of 72 pixels resolution. Copy and paste it to the layer above the first circle, change the opacity to 30% and the blend mode to Lighten. As before, apply a 1-pixel Gaussian blur to the layer and move it over the right eye of the girl.



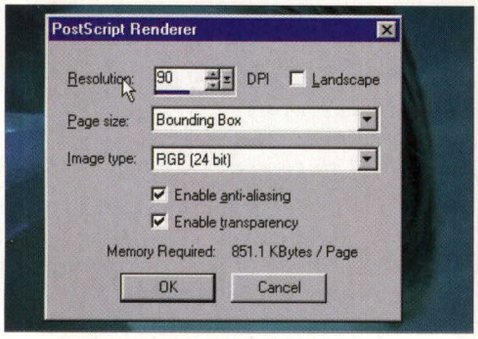
12 ALPHA MASKS

From the Selections menu, choose Load/Save selection and then Load Selection From Alpha Channel. In the pop-up window you will see the alpha channel, which will be black and white. Click the Load button and now press Control & C to copy the selection to the pasteboard.



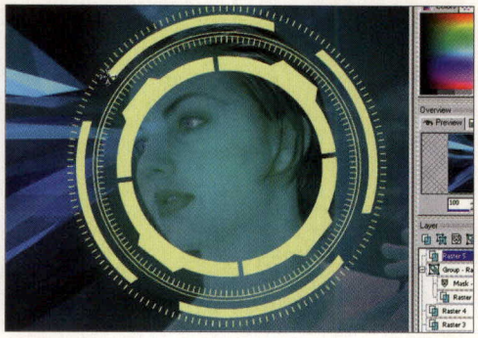
13 PASTE TO NEW LAYER

Click back on your composition image and press Control & L to paste the selection to a new layer. Use the Deform tool to change the scale of this layer to 50% in the options above the image. Remember to scale both X and Y axes, otherwise the image will be out of proportion.



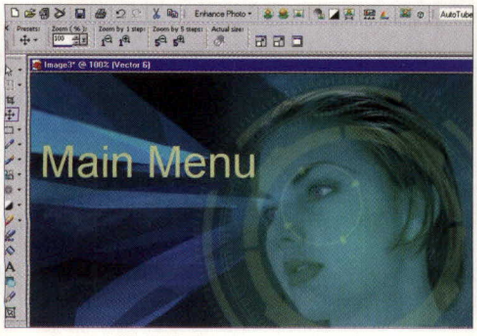
16 POSTSCRIPT RENDERER

Change the resolution to 90 instead of 72 and make sure that both Enable Anti-aliasing and Enable Transparency are checked, then click OK to apply. The artwork should appear as self-contained and transparent. Press Control & A to select all and then Control & C to copy the image.



17 PASTE IN PLACE

Select the composition image now, make sure you have the very top layer group selected, then press Control & L to paste it in as a new layer above the others. Use the Move Layer tool to position the circle above the girl's head with the centre focusing on her face.



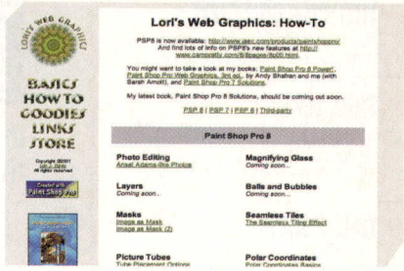
20 ADD TEXT

Select a light beige background colour by clicking on the background and choosing the appropriate colour. Then click on the Text tool and add 48pt text to the page with the page heading on it. Click Apply when finished. The text can be repositioned by selecting the Move tool.

21 MORE TEXT

Now click the Add Vector Layer icon in the Layer palette, changing the opacity of each layer to 60%, and add more text at 16pt, positioning the links around the edge of the circle. The page is now ready to be exported to the Internet, to use as a home or splash page on your Web site.

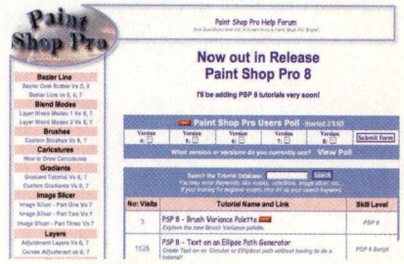
BOOKMARKS



LORI'S WEB GRAPHICS

loriweb.pair.com/howto.html

Lori has written several PSP books, and on this site there are loads of great tutorials that make essential reading, including a section on masks. The nice thing is that the tutorials cover a wide range from basics to expert level.



PAINT SHOP PRO TUTORIALS AND ART GALLERY

www.udraw2.com

This site has a superb list of tips and tutorials to help budding PSP users get to grips with the program. The mask section is comprehensive and will help you get the most from the software.

GEEK SPEAK

ALPHA CHANNELS

Alpha channels are masks that have been saved with the image for future use, but rather than have the mask applied to the image, it's saved in an extra channel so it can be loaded by the user if necessary. Channels are normally made up of the colour mode of the image. Web graphics are in the RGB format, so there'll be a channel for red, green and blue, which are the hues pixels are made from. The alpha channel is then saved alongside these colour channels.

VECTOR LAYERS

PSP can support vector layers, which are made up of mathematical points as opposed to pixels. Fonts are vector shapes, so any font layers become vector layers. As they're not pixel-based layers, they can be scaled up and down easily without getting jagged edges.

TUTORIAL: PAINT SHOP PRO
EXPLORE THE POWERFUL DESIGN TOOLS IN PSP 8

THE EXPERT: ROB CLYMO

Rob is the Editor of *Web Pages Made Easy*, one of the UK's longest-running magazines dedicated to creating Web sites. He has worked extensively as a freelance writer and Web designer in the past, contributing to some of the most well-known design magazines in the UK. You can see an example of Rob's work for a Lymington-based watch shop at www.discountwatchshop.com.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Explore the Web design power tools inside Paint Shop Pro 8

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
30 minutes

ON THE DISC
Paint Shop Pro/ Tutorial files: building.jpg, navbar.pspimage

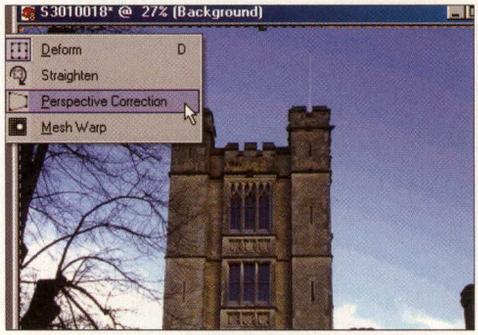
EXPLORE THE POWERFUL DESIGN TOOLS IN PSP 8

If you thought Photoshop was the be-all and end-all of image editing, think again. Paint Shop Pro 8 has everything you need and more besides!

PSP has a reputation for being a cheap and cheerful alternative to high-end image editors, but that really is being unfair. Yes, the package is cheap, especially when compared to Photoshop or Fireworks MX 2004, but it's also an unsung hero when it comes to working wonders with Web graphics.

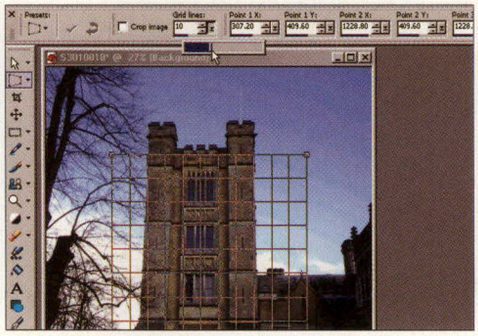
There are doubtless many users who've let its more intricate tools and techniques pass them by completely, but if you spend a little time delving past those Crop, Rotate and Resize tools, you'll find that inside Paint Shop Pro 8 is a veritable image-editing superhero waiting to help you out with the most adventurous of Web graphics chores.

In this tutorial we'll create the sort of navigation bar that's typical of many sites. Besides standard graphic creation techniques, we'll explore complex tools like Perspective Correction and Background Erasing, plus using the built-in PSP filters and scripting palettes, all of which should leave you with a navigation bar to use on your own site.



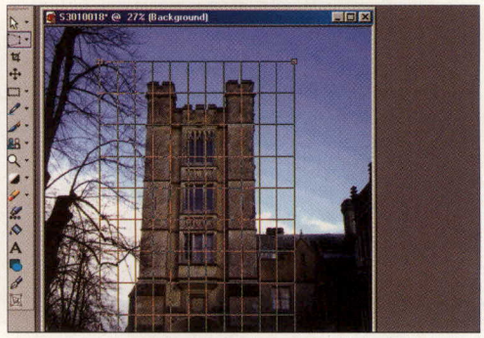
1 ASSEMBLING THE COMPONENT PARTS

We'll be creating a navigation bar during this tutorial, so first we'll need to assemble the various component parts. Here we have a digital photograph which needs some editing prior to being added. Open the image and select the Perspective Correction tool in the left-hand toolbar.



2 ON THE GRID

Perspective Correction can be used to edit images that have been taken on an angle or which don't look quite right. Click on the work area with this tool and then use the Grid Lines tool at the top of the window to edit how many guidelines are displayed.

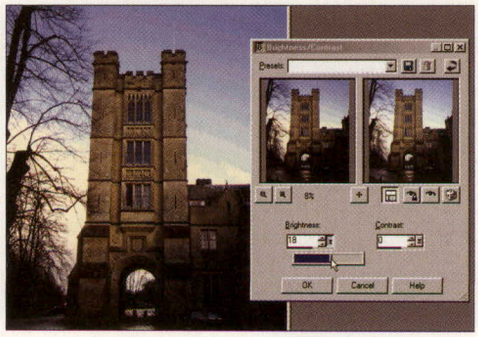


3 EDITING THE IMAGE

Hold down the Control key to edit the image symmetrically, then drag the corners of the grid. Alternatively, hold down the Shift key in order to adjust the image asymmetrically. Using this tool, it's possible to scale and shear images along with making them look more acceptable.

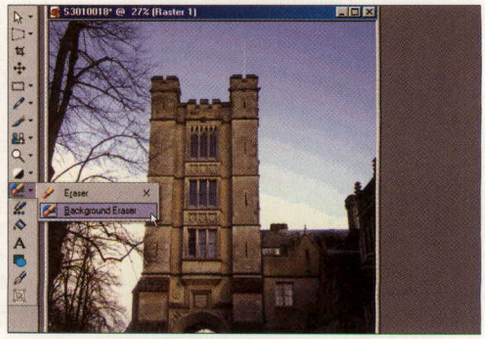
4 ADJUST COLOUR CAST

Besides improving the perspective of your shot, you can also edit and improve the colour balance. Go to the Adjust menu and select Automatic Color Balance. Even in default mode this will remove any unwanted colour cast that may be affecting your shot.



5 ADJUST BRIGHTNESS AND CONTRAST

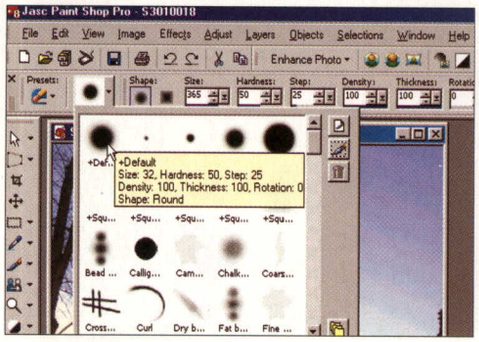
Similarly, use the Brightness/Contrast tool in the Adjust menu to bring up any dark areas such as those in this shot. Use the slider tools to make changes and then view the preview in the small windows above. When you're happy click on the OK button.



6 ERASING UNWANTED COLOUR

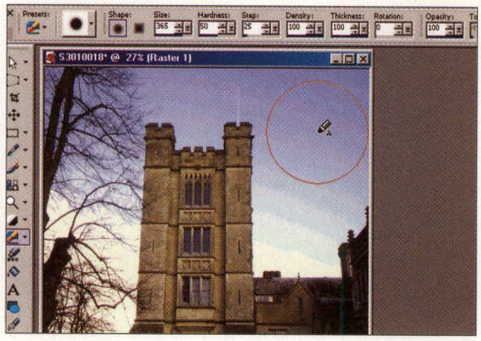
Another great new tool in PSP 8 is the Background Eraser option found in the main left-hand toolbar. Select this as shown and then use the menu options along the top of the interface to select a brush style, size and any other options prior to editing your shot.

TUTORIAL: PAINT SHOP PRO
EXPLORE THE POWERFUL DESIGN TOOLS IN PSP 8


Jasc Paint Shop Pro - S3010018
File Edit View Image Effects Adjust Layers Objects Selections Window Help
Enhance Photo
+Default
Size: 32, Hardness: 50, Step: 25
Density: 100, Thickness: 100, Rotation: 0
Shape: Round

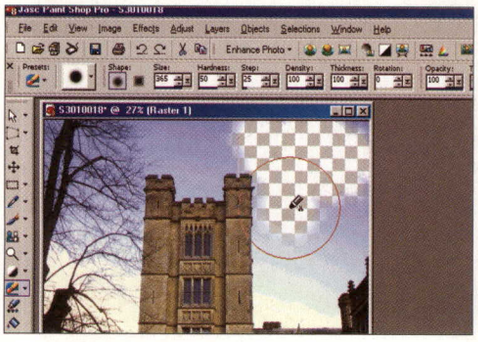
7 SIZING IT UP

There's a wealth of different brush tips to choose from, but for standard background removal pick a regular round tip like this one. Adjust its size using the slider to the right of the palette. Adventurous souls can use the many other options along the top of this window.



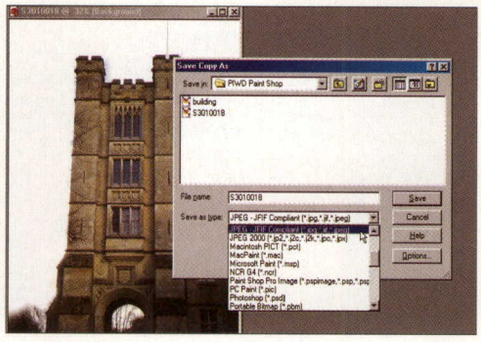
8 REMOVING UNWANTED COLOUR

Now hold down the Control key with your mouse placed over the area you wish to remove. This will automatically sample the shade. Release the Control key and start using the brush to remove the unwanted area. Resample the colour if you move to an area with a different



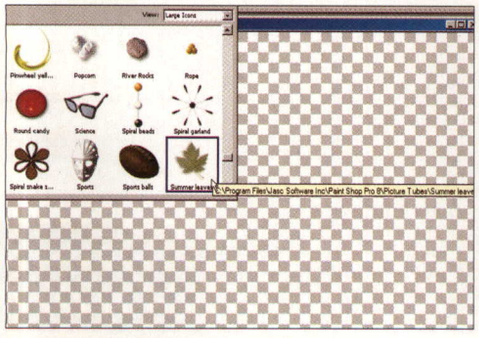
9 BRUSH IT OUT

Work around the background of your image, removing all the unwanted areas of colour. The larger the brush and image the slower this process will be, but images for the Web should be low resolution – usually around the 72dpi size – and therefore pretty quick to edit.



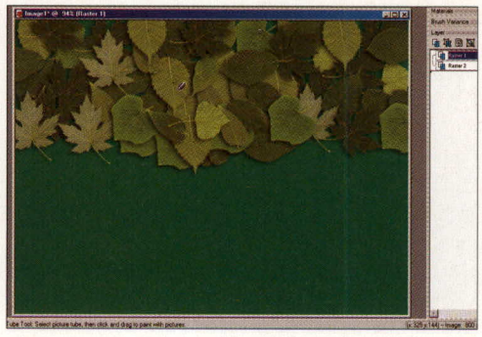
10 FINISHING UP

We're just about done – simply use the Crop tool to trim away any unwanted areas of the image and export it. Photographic images should be saved as JPEGs. Now import this file into the foundation document for the navigation bar, which we'll start in the next step.



11 NAVIGATION FOUNDATIONS

Create a blank working area that will form the basis of the navigation bar. Select File>New and pick a background colour. We've opted for Transparent, as we'll be using our own fill to get a natty artistic effect using picture tubes; these are filters that can be used to 'paint' pictures onto an image.



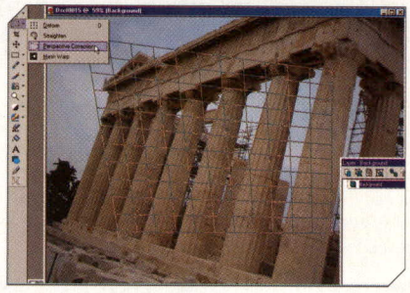
12 PAINTING BY NUMBERS

Use the picture tube to paint the selected filter onto your canvas – in this case it's various leaves. You can also beef up your background by adding a background layer in a complementary colour as shown here. Simply create a new layer, place it at the back and fill with a suitable shade.

TECHNIQUE

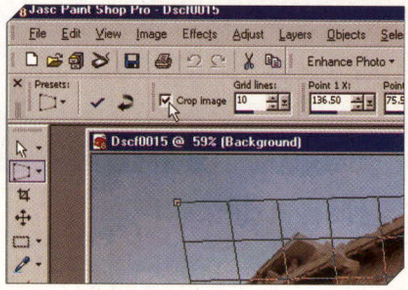
WORKING WITH PERSPECTIVE CORRECTION

Editing digital photo images is usually pretty straightforward, but a shot that's been taken at a bad angle will need attention. It can be straightened by the Perspective Correction tool, which manipulates crooked pictures with ease.



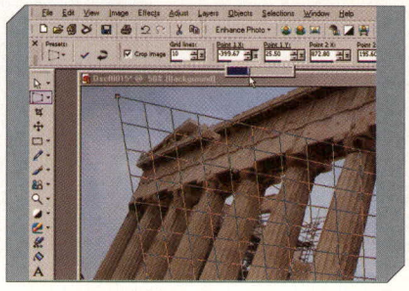
1 STRAIGHTEN IT UP

The Perspective Correction tool lets you get to grips with any images that may have been spoilt by the camera being at the wrong angle when the shot was taken. It enables you to place a grid over the image and then move the corners to straighten it.



2 OTHER OPTIONS

Besides the straightening techniques, you can distort and skew images and crop them around the grid by checking this small tickbox in the top left corner. Some practice with this tool will mean you can correct all but the most disastrous of pictures

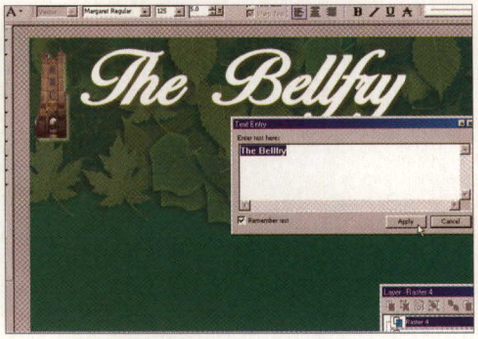


3 FINE-TUNING

This tool is also highly customisable. There's a selection of sliders to the right of the Crop tool that let every aspect of the correction grid be manipulated. It's not the easiest of concepts, but practice will help you develop some really useful image-editing skills.

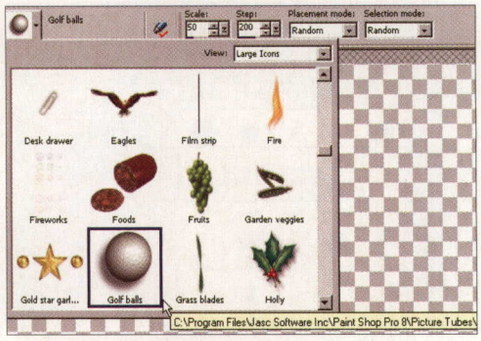
13 PASTE A NEW LAYER

Now open, copy and paste the Building image onto the background, ensuring that it's on a unique layer so you can edit it independently. Use the Distort option from the toolbar and drag the corners to carry out any resizing that's needed to get it to fit the layout.



14 ADDING TEXT

With our background and photographic image in place, we need to add text for the name of our establishment. Click the Text tool, select the font and type size, then type the text into the dialog box as shown. You can select a complementary colour for your text then move this layer into the correct place.

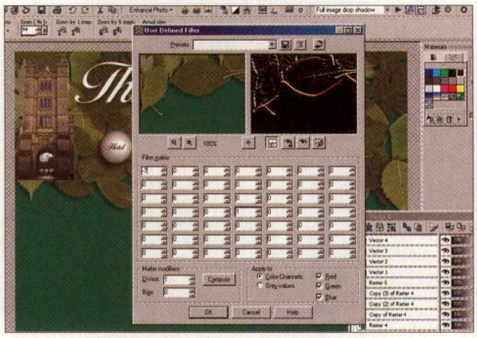


15 NEW BALLS PLEASE

With our background pretty much assembled, we now need some navigation buttons. Create a new blank document – any size will be okay as we'll crop away the excess later. Now select the Golf Ball option from the Picture Tube palette as we've shown previously.

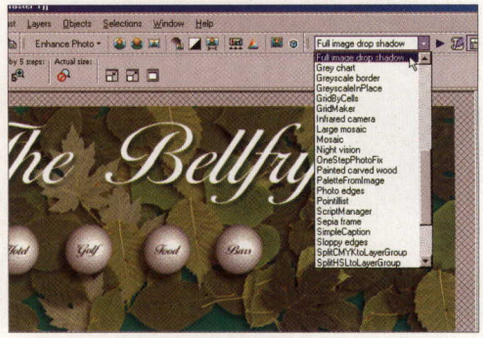
17 PASTE IN PLACE

Paste each of the graphics in place on your main image. Use the Move tool to get them into position so they look reasonably neat on the page. The idea is to use this graphic as a Web page header advertising an exclusive golf club (spelled differently to any famous courses, of course!).



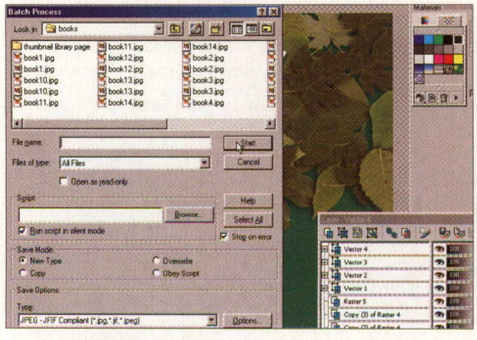
18 MAKE YOUR OWN FILTERS

As with all the visual effects you've seen during this tutorial, PSP 8 allows the user to customise their settings or start from scratch. To do this, select User Defined... from the Effects menu and try experimenting with the settings in the dialog. Previews are always shown in the window on the right.



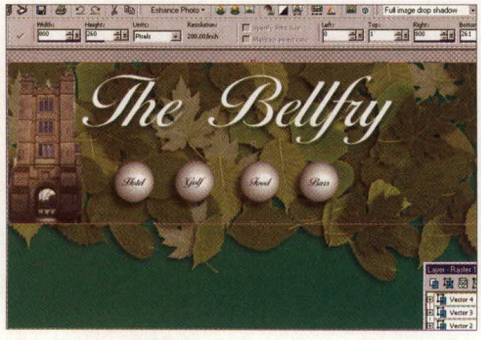
19 SPEED UP WORKFLOW

Another highly useful aspect of the new PSP 8 interface is its ability to offer scripting. You'll find the options in the top right-hand corner, and there's a whole array of options to choose from in this drop-down menu, which enables you to carry out tasks with just the click of a mouse.



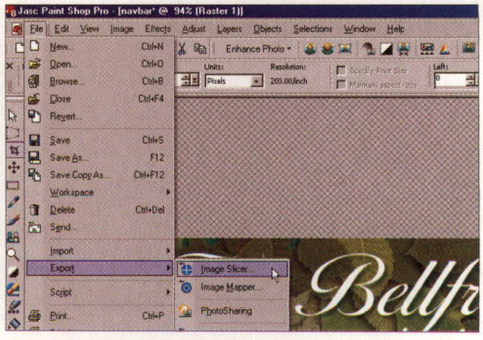
21 SPEED IT UP

One area where scripting comes in particularly handy is renaming multiple images – something that's commonly needed by Web site builders. Use the Script Editor to assemble a script, which opens and then saves all your images in one fell swoop. An instant way to speed up productivity.



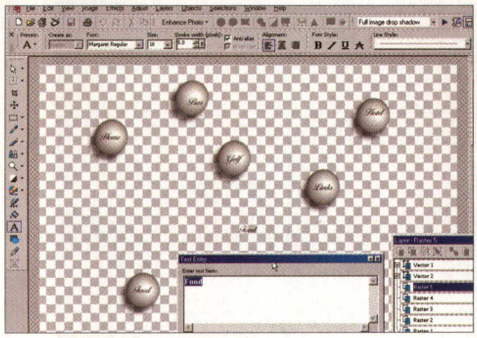
22 TRIMMING THE EXCESS

Now that we have our page elements assembled, it's time to trim away the excess areas of the image. Use the Crop tool at the top of the left-hand menu bar and drag across the area to be trimmed. Double-click to remove the area that's outside the guideline.



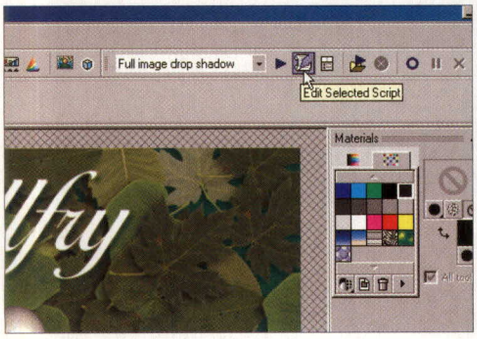
23 SLICING IT UP

Any larger Web image will invariably need slicing up in order to use it on an HTML page. PSP 8 has an improved set of tools for achieving this, and to get started you'll need to go to the Export menu and select the Image Slicer... option.



16 CREATE A BUTTON

Click on your canvas once with the Picture Tube tool to place a golf ball image as above. Now use the Type tool to create the wording that will appear on the ball. We'll create a unique message for each ball we create, and these in turn will form the basis of our navigation buttons.



20 SCRIPT EDITING

Perhaps more impressively, it's also possible to edit these scripts, or create your own from scratch using this small menu bar. You can also start and stop scripts. These work like simple macro commands, which enable everyday tasks to be recorded, stored and then used whenever you need them.

IN DETAIL: DISCOVERING FILTERS IN PSP 8

Using filter effects in Paint Shop Pro can quickly transform the look of otherwise standard Web graphics

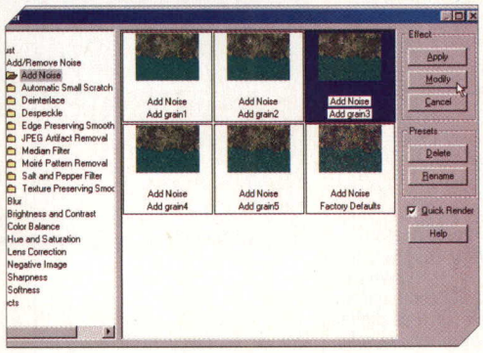
As the demands on Web designers' skills increase, so do our expectations of the software that helps us get the job done. These days it's pretty much the norm to expect image-editing software to go that extra mile to help create amazing effects, and Paint Shop Pro is no exception.

Just like Photoshop and Fireworks MX 2004, Paint Shop Pro bristles with a juicy selection of built-in graphics filters which enable the user to create exciting transformations within the space of a few mouse clicks. Pay a visit to the Effects menu in the main PSP 8 interface and select the Effects Browser. In here you'll be able to explore all the preset filters and effects that have been built into the application.

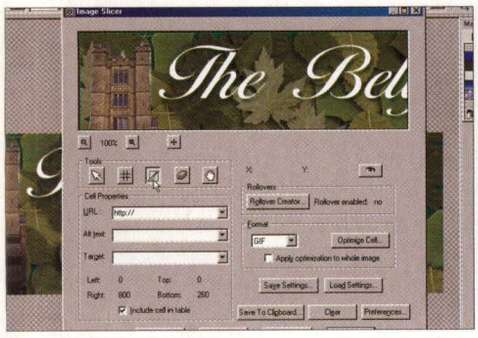
However, it doesn't stop there. If you click on the Modify button as shown, it's possible to edit and/or create your own effects. The same can be said for any other aspect of the effects in PSP 8, and also covers the Paint Tubes options where unique images can be imported into the program in a series of simple steps.

It's also possible to import third-party filters and effects, and many of these are free. Simply do a quick search on the Internet and you should be able to locate a complete selection, which can then be added into PSP 8. Bear in mind that more complex filters and large images mean that it will take more memory for your computer to run effectively. For more on this aspect of the program, go to the built-in Help library, which is found at the top right of the main menu. ■

■ To save mishaps with the many effects that Paint Shop Pro 8 has to offer you, make use of the Effect Browser instead

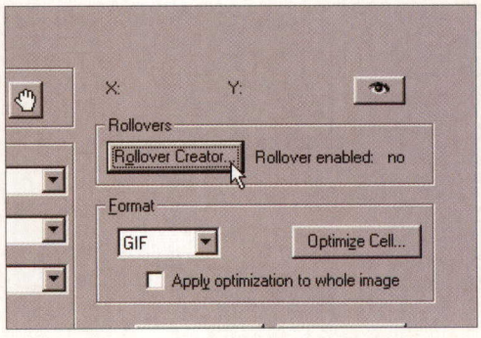


■ You can view any potential changes to your artwork quickly and easily, comparing and contrasting different effects



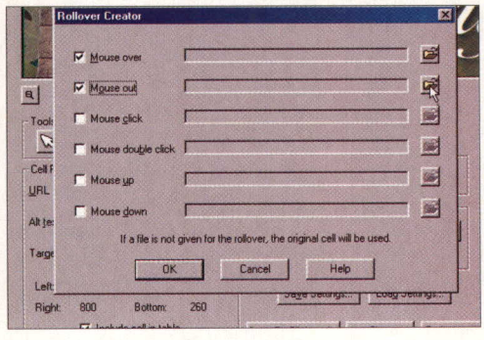
24 EDITING CENTRE

The Image Slicer palette enables all sorts of work to be carried out. There are tools contained in here for slicing images and also turning selected slices into links and rollovers. Indeed, the Rollover Creator option enables complex actions to be enlisted for a more sophisticated effect.



25 CHOOSING ROLLOVER OPTIONS

Rollovers are not as complicated as they may seem. All you need to do with this control palette is create a different version of the same button for each of the states and then browse for it in your Graphics folder. Once an image is assigned, it will rollover for each different state.



26 SELECT AN ALTERNATIVE

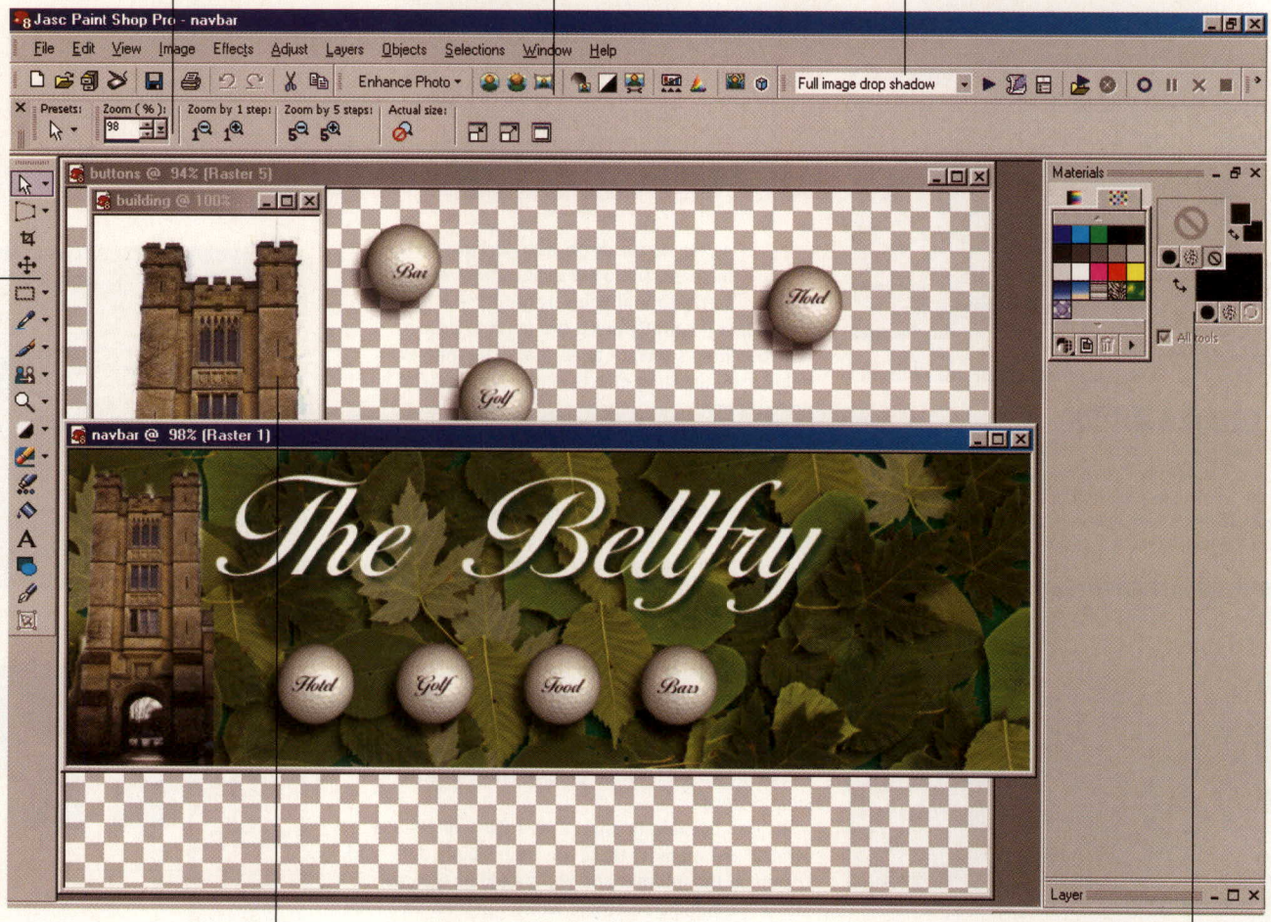
The different versions of the same graphic should be kept in a central graphics folder containing all your Web site images. This way it will be easier to recognise the corresponding images that will together create your eventual rollover button.

TUTORIAL: PAINT SHOP PRO
EXPLORE THE POWERFUL DESIGN TOOLS IN PSP 8

Design and development
Manage the design and development of your graphics using the palettes located on the right-hand side of the interface

Quick fixes
These new coloured icons allow one-stop quick fixes using a simple click of your mouse

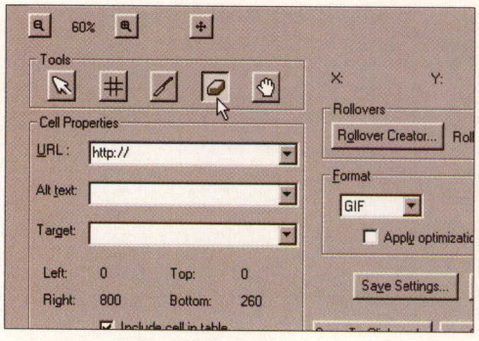
Scripts
Create and edit your own pre-recorded scripts using these Tool options located in the main menu



Tool palette
The latest version of PSP has a raft of new editing tools located in the main Tool palette

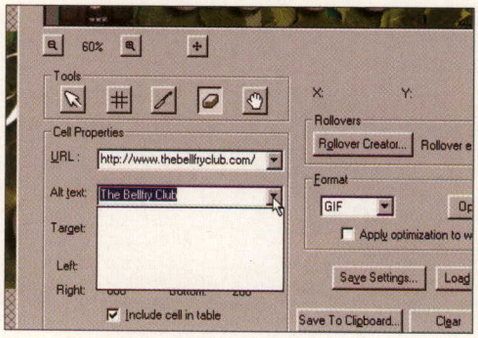
Composite images
Create composite Web images using a variety of different sources such as digital pictures and solid colour filters

Adjustment options
Fine-tune any of the editing tools you're using with these adjustment options, which change depending on the option used



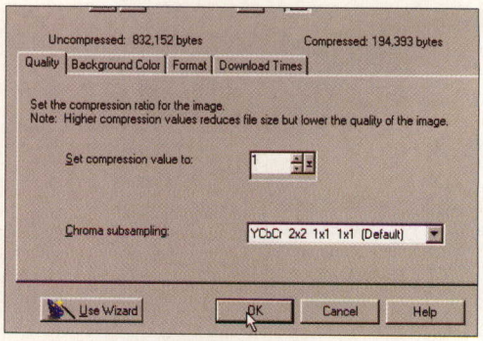
27 REMOVING SLICES

The slices can be added using the small Knife tool and then edited on the work area by dragging the guidelines to wherever you need them on the graphic. Use the Eraser tool to remove any unwanted slices you may have created by mistake.



28 ADDING TECHNICAL TOUCHES

It's also crucial to remember that any links must be added using this dialog window. Create a URL in the box as shown, and don't forget to add Alt text in the box immediately below it. You'll also want to specify a target for the linked page to open in.



29 COMPRESSION OPTIONS

You'll also need to take compression options into consideration for your graphic. After all, it's quite large, so while slicing it up can help, try compressing the graphics in the JPEG format for a slimline option and more efficient pages. Now export the graphic as you would any other Web image.

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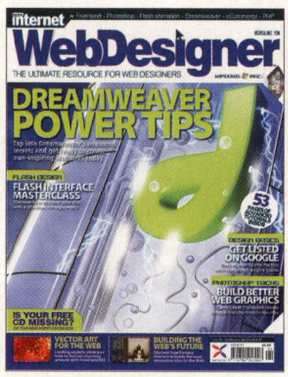

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Take your sites to new levels with our Dreamweaver tips. Also, learn how to get your site listed on search engines and find out about online customer support. We profile Stickee's Your Face Or Mine site and Fantasy Interactive.

Tutorial highlights:

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THE EXPERT: RACHEL ANDREW

Rachel is a director of Web development company edgeofmyseat.com (**www.edgeofmyseat.com**), and is currently a member of the Web Standards Project (**www.webstandards.org**). With years of Webmaster experience, she has co-written a number of books for Glasshaus (**www.glasshaus.com**) on Web development, the most recent of which was *Dreamweaver MX Design Projects*.

PART THREE

BUILD A WEB PORTAL THAT VISITORS CAN CUSTOMISE

In the third part of this tutorial we create the log-in scripts to allow users to log into their account

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create log-in scripts for users of the portal

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
One hour

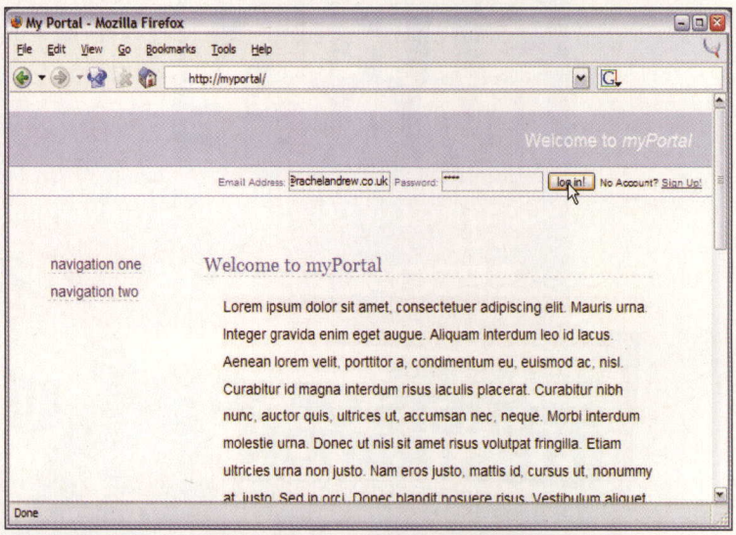
ON THE DISC
Developer/ Tutorial files: accessdenied.php, conn.php, global.css, index.php & more

The aim of this multi-part tutorial is to design and build a user-customisable portal site, where users have control over the look and feel and content that's displayed. In the first two parts of the tutorial we designed a portal site that will allow for customisation by the user, and last time we created a sign-up page, enabling users to sign up for an account on the portal. If you haven't followed these first two parts, you will find that all the files and an SQL script to create the database table are available on the CD.

In this part of the tutorial we will take the user accounts we created last month and allow users to sign into their account with their email address and password. We already have a login form as part of our design – it's located in the include top.php, so we simply need to set the action of that form to 'login.php'.

The script login.php checks the email address and password that have been entered and sees if they exist in the database. Login.php is simply a PHP script. It doesn't display anything to the user and therefore does not need to have any of the site design included in it.

If the email address and password are found, we will set a cookie that identifies this user and redirect them to their personal page. In the next tutorial we'll be adding to this page, but at the moment just create a new page in the design and name it 'mypage.php'.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http://myportal/
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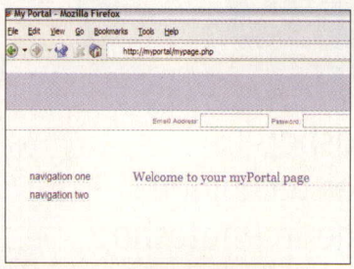
Email Address: Prachelandrew.co.uk Password: ****
log in! No Account? Sign Up!
navigation one
navigation two
Welcome to myPortal
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Mauris urna. Integer gravida enim eget augue. Aliquam interdum leo id lacus. Aenean lorem velit, porttitor a, condimentum eu, euismod ac, nisl. Curabitur id magna interdum risus iaculis placerat. Curabitur nibh nunc, auctor quis, ultrices ut, accumsan nec, neque. Morbi interdum molestie urna. Donec ut nisl sit amet risus volutpat fringilla. Etiam ultricies urna non justo. Nam eros justo, mattis id, cursus ut, nonummy at, justo. Sed in orci. Donec blandit posuere risus. Vestibulum aliquet
Done

Users of the portal will be able to log in using the email address and password they signed up with

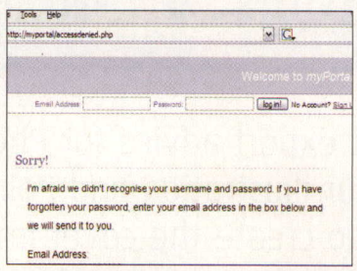
If the script cannot find the email address or password, it redirects the user to a page named 'accessdenied.php', which is another new page within the site design. On this page we can give the user a message to let them know that their login has failed. Failed logins are most likely due to people forgetting their password – particularly if you use email addresses as usernames, as we do.

So that users are not constantly emailing you to find out what their password is, a nice piece of functionality is a Forgotten Password script. The user can enter their email address into the form on this page. The script then looks for the email address in the database and, if it finds it, emails the password to that address. We can then let the user know the password has been sent so they can go and check their mail, or indicate that it has failed due to this address not being registered in the database.

This part of the tutorial forms the basis of a simple login system for the site. In the next part we will look at using this system in order to secure the pages on which the user updates their profile, and also to begin setting preferences that will be stored against the user's details, so the portal displays their preferences when they visit the site with a cookie. ■



After a successful sign-up the user is redirected to their own page, where details of their preferences will be listed

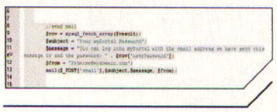

Tools Help
http://myportal/accessdenied.php
Email Address: Password: log in! No Account? Sign
Sorry!
I'm afraid we didn't recognise your username and password. If you have forgotten your password, enter your email address in the box below and we will send it to you.
Email Address:

If they enter an incorrect email or password, they are redirected to accessdenied.php, where they can request their forgotten password

CODING TIP

THE PHP MAIL( ) FUNCTION

The PHP function mail() that we've used in this tutorial is a standard function. To use it on your test system you need to have an SMTP server installed – your host should have this set up for you on your live server. mail() accepts 4 parameters: the To address, subject, message and additional headers (such as From:). You will need to set a To address, and on some Web hosts either the From or To address needs to be an address ending with the domain of the site, or an address registered with them – to help guard against spam.



THE CODE

DESCRIPTION

Find out below exactly how to create a simple login system

1 In a new script login.php we include the connection include conn.php, and then get the username and password that have been posted from the form. We use these variables to do a select query on the database to see if any record exists with this email address and password.

2 If we find a record for this email address and password, we can log in the user. We store their userID in a cookie using the PHP setcookie() function. We then redirect the user to "mypage.php" which will eventually become the page on which they can view and change their settings.

3 If we do not find any record for this email address and password, we redirect the user to accessdenied.php.

4 The page accessdenied.php contains a form to allow the user to request their password. If this form has been posted, the variable btnSendPass will be greater than nothing, and we can do a select query on the database to find the record relating to the email address sent in the form.

5 If we find a record, we construct an email to the user that gives them the password associated in the database with this email address. We use the PHP mail() command to send the mail to the user, setting the variable $mail to "sent". If we don't find a record, we do nothing other than set $mail to "nouser".

6 If $mail == "sent" we display a message so the user can check their email to get their password.

7 If $mail == "nouser" we couldn't find this email address in the database; perhaps the user isn't registered at all or signed up with a different address. Display a message to give them some advice.

8 Otherwise, the form hasn't been posted and this is just a standard redirect from the login.php script. Explain that the login has failed and show the form so the user can request their password.

```
<?php
require("conn.php");

$user = $_POST['userName'];
$pass = $_POST['userPassword'];

$result = mysql_query("SELECT * FROM tblUsers WHERE userEmail = '" . $user . "' AND userPassword =
'" . $pass . "'");
```

```
if (mysql_num_rows($result) != 0) {
        $row = mysql_fetch_array($result);
        setcookie ("myPortal", $row['userID'],time()+31449600, "/");
        header("Location:mypage.php");
```

```
} else {
        header("Location:accessdenied.php");
}
?>
```

```
<?php
require("conn.php");
if ($_POST['btnSendPass'] != "") {
        $result = mysql_query("SELECT userPassword FROM tblUsers WHERE userEmail = '" .
$_POST['email'] . "'");
```

```
if (mysql_num_rows($result) != 0) {

                $row = mysql_fetch_array($result);
                $subject = "Your myPortal Password";
                $message = "You can log into myPortal with the email address we have sent this
message to and the password: " . $row['userPassword'];
                $from = "From:me@mydomain.com";
                mail($_POST['email'],$subject,$message, $from);
                $mail = "sent";
        } else {
                $mail = "nouser";
        }
}
?><!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
        "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">

<html>
<head>
<title>My Portal</title>
<?php require("top.php");
```

```
if ($mail == "sent") {?>
<h1>Thank you!</h1>
<p>Your password has been sent to this email address. </p>
<?php
```

```
} elseif ($mail == "nouser") {
?>
<h1>Sorry!</h1>
<p>We couldn't find that email address registered. Please <a href="signup.php">sign up</a> for a
new account.</p>

<?php
```

```
} else {
?>
<h1>Sorry!</h1>
<p>I'm afraid we didn't recognise your username and password. If you have forgotten your password,
enter your email address in the box below and we will send it to you.</p>

<form method="post" action="accessdenied.php">
<p><label for="email">Email Address:</label><br />
<input type="text" name="email" id="email" class="txt" /></p>
<p><input type="submit" name="btnSendPass" id="btnSendPass" value="Send My Password!" /></p>

</form>
<?php
}
mysql_close($conn);
?>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

THE EXPERT: RACHEL ANDREW

Rachel is a director of Web development company edgeofmyseat.com (**www.edgeofmyseat.com**), and is currently a member of the Web Standards Project (**www.webstandards.org**). With years of Webmaster experience, she has co-written a number of books for Glasshaus (**www.glasshaus.com**) on Web development, the most recent of which was *Dreamweaver MX Design Projects*.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Add simple search functionality using the MySQL FULLTEXT search

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED

One hour

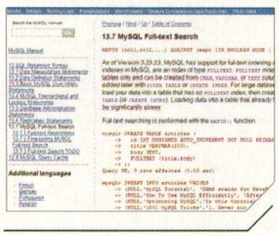
ON THE DISC

Developer/ Tutorial files: admin [folder], css.css, global.css, articles.php, conn.php & more

CODING TIP

LEARN MORE ABOUT FULLTEXT

We are using the FULLTEXT searching capabilities of MySQL in a very simple way in this tutorial to perform a text search on data in our table. However, there's more to be learned about this functionality than can be covered here, and a good way to find out more is to visit the MySQL manual. As well as view examples on display, you can post comments, bits of code and potential problems that will help debug any issues you are having and create more complex searches. The details about FULLTEXT in the MySQL Manual can be found at: **www.mysql.com/doc/en/Fulltext_Search.html.**



PART SEVEN

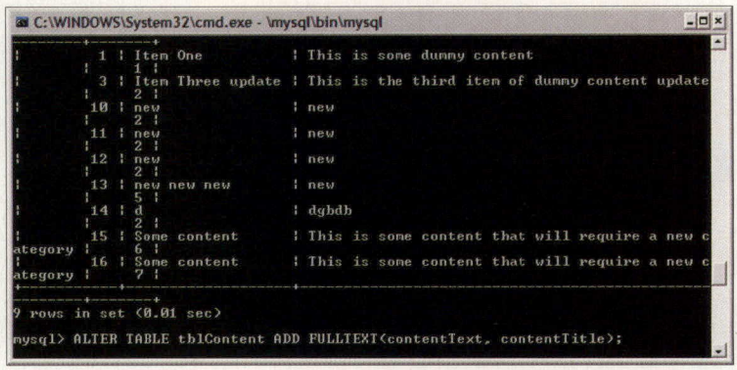
CREATE A CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In part seven of this tutorial we will create a search function for the site, in order to search the database content

This is the seventh part of our series on creating a CMS in PHP and MySQL. If you have been following along, you will so far have installed PHP and MySQL on your computer, created database tables in MySQL to store content and created pages that display content, which is categorised – the categories making a simple navigation menu. We have created an Administration section for the site, which allows the addition, editing and deleting of content and categories from the site from the Web, making it easy for a non-technical user who does not know HTML to update the site.

If you didn't catch earlier instalments of this tutorial but have Apache, PHP and MySQL installed on your computer, you can pick up from this point by running the SQL script from the CD in MySQL (or opening it up in Notepad and creating the table structure by hand), and using the files that are on the CD. The files on the CD contain all the code from this tutorial and the last six issues, including a style sheet to do some basic formatting.

In this final instalment we will add search functionality to the Content Management System. One of the great advantages of having a CMS is the fact that you are able to easily search content that is stored in a database, which makes it simple to give your users the ability to search the database. By doing a simple keyword search against the content, we can then present the user with a list of pages that contain content relevant to their search.


C:\WINDOWS\System32\cmd.exe - \mysql\bin\mysql
1	Item One	This is some dummy content	1
3	Item Three update	This is the third item of dummy content update	2
10	new	new	2
11	new	new	2
12	new	new	2
13	new new new	new	5
14	d	dgbdb	2
15	Some content	This is some content that will require a new c	6
16	Some content	This is some content that will require a new c	7
9 rows in set (0.01 sec)
mysql> ALTER TABLE tblContent ADD FULLTEXT(contentText, contentTitle);

■ To use the MYSQL FULLTEXT search, we need to create an index on the database table tblContent to search on

To create our search functionality we will use the MySQL FULLTEXT search. The first thing we need to do in order to use the FULLTEXT search is create an index against which to search. Log into the MySQL Monitor at the command prompt. Once you're logged in, select the CMS database and type the following:

ALTER TABLE tblContent ADD FULLTEXT(contentTitle,contentText);

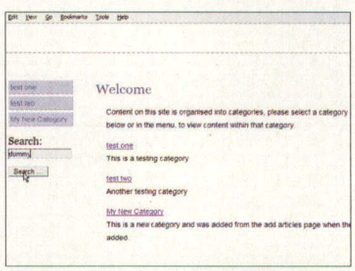
Now that you've done this you can run FULLTEXT searches against the content that's in the title and text fields on the table tblContent. In order to do this at the command prompt you can type:

SELECT * FROM tblContent WHERE MATCH (contentTitle,contentText) AGAINST ('text');

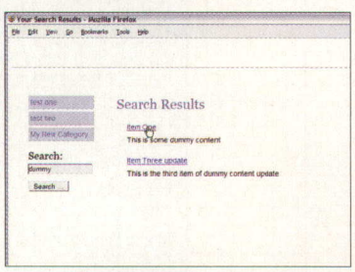
In the above statement, replace 'text' with the words you would like to search on, in single quotes.

In this final part of the tutorial, we'll be creating a search form that will enable users to enter their search terms and then a search display page where the content that they have searched on can be displayed, allowing them to click through to the full item. You'll find all the info you need on the next page.

If you are running MySQL 4 you can use FULLTEXT in a more advanced way with Boolean searches, giving you greater control over the results that are displayed – and this also means that you can offer more advanced search tools to your users. However, as many hosting companies have not yet upgraded, the search used in this tutorial works with MySQL from 3.23 upwards. ■



■ Users of the site can now enter keywords in the text field in order to search the site database contents



■ After clicking the Search button, MySQL FULLTEXT search returns a list of articles relevant to the words in the post

THE CODE

DESCRIPTION

Read on to discover how to add simple search functionality:

1 This form can be placed on any page of your site that you wish to have the search on. The form simply has a text field with the name 'Words' and a Submit button. This is posted to the Search page 'search.php'.

```
<h2>Search:</h2>
<form method="post" action="search.php">
<p><input type="text" name="words" class="txt" /></p>
<p><input type="submit" value="Search ..." class="btn" /></p>
</form>
```

2 On search.php we run a FULLTEXT search using the words that the user entered in the form field. The FULLTEXT search searches the contents of contentTitle and contentText for the entered words. You need to have added the fulltext index to your table as described in the introduction to this article for it to work.

```
<?php
require("conn.php");
//query the database for a list of the content for the search term
$content = mysql_query("SELECT contentID, contentTitle,contentText FROM tblContent WHERE MATCH
(contentTitle,contentText) AGAINST ('" . $_POST['words'] . "')", $conn);
```

3 As on our other site pages, we have a query that gets a list of the site categories and then builds the Navigation menu. The initial PHP complete, we can open our XHTML document and begin to display the page.

```
query the database for a list of categories - for the navigation menu
$result = mysql_query("SELECT catID, catName, catDesc FROM tblCat", $conn);
?><!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
        "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">

<html>
<head>
<title>Your Search Results</title>
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="global.css" />
</head>

<body>
<div id="banner">
<p> </p>
</div>
<div id="navigation">
<ul class="main">
```

4 We loop through the query and display the categories that make up the Navigation menu, so users can get back into the rest of the site if they don't find anything in the search.

```
<?php
//the navigation menu
while ($row = mysql_fetch_array($result)) {
        print("<li><a href=\"articles.php?catID=" . $row[catID] . "\">" . $row[catName] .
"</a></li>\n");
}
?>
</ul>
```

5 Now we can display the search form. When we display this form on the search page, we take the posted variable words and use that as the value in the text field 'Words', so the user can simply edit their query instead of having to enter it again – for example, if they had searched on too many words and got too much data back.

```
<h2>Search:</h2>
<form method="post" action="search.php">
<p><input type="text" name="words" class="txt" value="<?=$_POST['words']?>" /></p>
<p><input type="submit" value="Search ..." class="btn" /></p>
</form>
</div>
<div id="content">
```

6 To display the results we loop through the content array. As this is just a Results page, we display only an excerpt of the full text, just as we do on the main category pages. When we write out the title of that piece of content we make it into a link, so the user can click through and read the full article if it looks interesting.

```
<h1>Search Results</h1>
<?php
while ($contentrow = mysql_fetch_array($content)) {

        $arrayDesc = explode(" ", $contentrow[contentText]);
        $shortDesc = "";
        for($i=0 ; $i<30 ; $i++) {
                $shortDesc = $shortDesc . " " . $arrayDesc[$i];
        }

        print("<p><a href=\"showarticle.php?aID=" . $contentrow[contentID] . "\">" .
$contentrow[contentTitle] . "</a><br />\n");
        print($shortDesc . "</p>\n");
}
//you should close the connection when you are finished with it
mysql_close($conn);
?>

</div>
</body>
</html>
```

CREATE AN ONLINE POSTCARD SITE WITH ASP AND ACCESS

THE EXPERT: RACHEL ANDREW

Rachel is a director of Web development company edgeofmyseat.com (**www.edgeofmyseat.com**), and is currently a member of the Web Standards Project (**www.webstandards.org**). With years of Webmaster experience, she has co-written a number of books for Glasshaus (**www.glasshaus.com**) on Web development, the most recent of which was *Dreamweaver MX Design Projects*.

PART THREE

CREATE AN ONLINE POSTCARD SITE WITH ASP AND ACCESS

In part three of this multi-part tutorial we add a script to mail the postcards and a viewing page to display them

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Send the cards and create a View Your Card page

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED

One hour

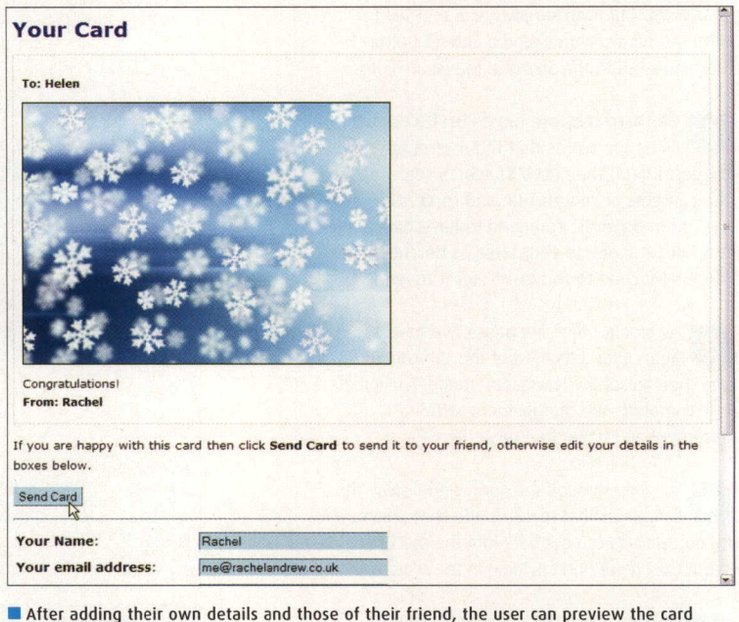
ON THE DISC

Developer/ Tutorial files: conn.asp, dbPostcards.mdb, details.asp, postcards.css & more

In the first part of this tutorial we created a page that displayed all the postcards that are available for the user to select from. The postcards are stored on the Web server, with a reference to their location stored in an Access database. Last time, in part two, we added a page where the user could fill in their details and those of their friend and preview how the card would look. Don't worry if you missed this first part, as both the code and the Access database are available on the CD so you can catch up now. To follow this article you'll need to have IIS installed on your computer. IIS comes on the Windows CD for Windows 2000 and XP Professional, but cannot be installed on XP Home or Windows Me. Windows 98 users can use PWS, also on their Windows CD.

In this tutorial we'll finish off the card creation script by sending the card to the friend's email address. We'll also be creating the page that will be linked in the email to which the friend will need to come to view their card.

On the page details.asp that we created last time to allow the user to preview their card, find the form that's displayed when the card is previewed – it currently just has a button named btnSend. You need to add to that form a hidden field that contains the cardID, which allows us to identify which card is being sent:


Your Card
To: Helen
Congratulations!
From: Rachel
If you are happy with this card then click Send Card to send it to your friend, otherwise edit your details in the boxes below.
Send Card
Your Name:
Rachel
Your email address:
me@rachelandrew.co.uk

After adding their own details and those of their friend, the user can preview the card that they have created

```
<input type="hidden" name="cardID"
id="cardID" value="<%=cardID%>" />
```

You'll also need to set the action of the form to sendcard.asp – and then create two new pages in the site: sendcard.asp which will perform the sending of the postcard email to the friend and let the user know that this has happened, and showcard.asp, which is the page the friend will visit after getting the email to view their card. sendcard.asp takes the variable posted in the hidden field we added, and uses it to create a record set containing the data we need to send the email – the names and email addresses. We can then create a personalised message using the friend's name and a link to their card, and send the mail.

When the friend receives their email they'll be able to click through to the site. The page sendcard.asp uses the ID in the querystring (which is the cardID) to create a record set. This time we need both the actual card information from tblPostcards and the user information from tblSentcards. To get info from both these tables without creating two record sets we join the tables on postcardID in the SQL.

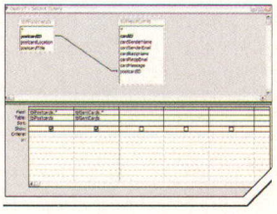
That's all there is to it! This is a very simple script and could be refined further, with the option to add more information or select colours for text and so on, but the basic process of creating the card remains the same. ■

CODING TIP

JOINING TWO DATABASE TABLES

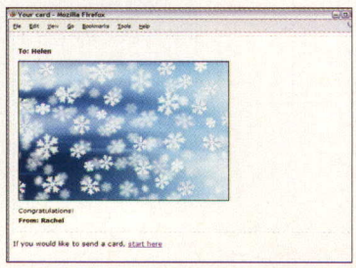
In this tutorial we join two database tables. This allows us to get data from related tables without having to create two record sets. To join tables they must have a common field – this will usually be the primary key of one table.

You can create the query in Access. Select Queries after opening your database and use either the wizard or Design view. Save your query – the SQL from the ASP page would select from the query instead of joining the tables – "SELECT * FROM myQuery WHERE cardID = " & cardID.



Select your Postcard - Mozilla Firefox
Your card has been sent
Your card has now been sent to your friend. You can view the card here.
To send another card, return to the selection page.

Clicking the Send button posts the form to sendcard.asp, where the card details are emailed to the friend



The friend now clicks on the link in their email to visit the Web site where they can view their card

THE CODE

DESCRIPTION

You have all the information you need, so let's get on with the coding:

1 Open the ASP page, declaring Option Explicit and including the Connection file. Get the posted variable cardID.

```
<%@LANGUAGE = "VBSCRIPT"%>
<%Option Explicit%>
<!—#include file="conn.asp"—>
<%Dim cardID, objMail, rsCard, strSQL
cardID = Request.Form("cardID")
```

2 Create a record set, getting the row from the database table tblSentCards which has the cardID that equals the posted variable cardID.

```
Set rsCard = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Recordset")
strSQL = "SELECT * FROM tblSentCards WHERE cardID = " & cardID
rsCard.open strSQL, conn
```

3 Send the email using CDONTS. The From field is the user's email address. We create the subject by adding the user's name to the subject, so the friend knows who it's from. The To field is the friend's email address, and the message is personalised by using the friend's name and a link to the page at which they can retrieve their card.

```
Set objMail = Server.CreateObject("CDONTS.NewMail")
objMail.From = rsCard("cardSenderEmail")
objMail.Subject = "You have been sent a card by " & rsCard("cardSenderName")
objMail.To = rsCard("cardRecipEmail")
objMail.Body = "Dear " & rsCard("cardRecipName") &vbcrlf &vbcrlf & "You have been sent a card by "
& rsCard("cardSenderName") &vbcrlf &vbcrlf & "Click on the link below to view your card" &vbcrlf
&vbcrlf & "http://pmz.eg/postcards/showcard.asp?id=" & rsCard("cardID")
objMail.Send
```

4 Close the Mail object and close and destroy the record set to free up the resources that these take up.

```
set objMail = nothing
rsCard.close
set rsCard = Nothing
%><!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
          "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">

<html>
<head>
<title>Select your Postcard</title>
<link href="postcards.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" />
</head>

<body>
<div id="content">
```

5 Display a message to the user to let them know the card has been sent.

```
<h1>Your card has been sent</h1>
<p>Your card has now been sent to your friend. You can view the card <a
href="http://pmz.eg/postcards/showcard.asp?id=<%=cardID%>">here</a>.</p>
<p>To send another card, return to the <a href="select.asp">selection page</a>.</p>
<%
conn.close
Set conn = Nothing%>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

6 Begin the page showcard.asp that displays the card. Get the cardID from the querystring parameter ID. If cardID is empty, set the variable nocard to 'true' as we cannot retrieve a card with no ID.

```
<%@LANGUAGE = "VBSCRIPT"%>
<%Option Explicit%>
<!—#include file="conn.asp"—>
<%Dim cardID, objMail, rsCard, strSQL, nocard
cardID = Request.QueryString("id")
if cardID = "" Then
          nocard = true
else
```

7 Open the record set joining the two tables tblPostcards and tblSentCards. Check to see if eof is true. If it is, the record set is empty and we've no card to display, so set nocard to 'true'.

```
Set rsCard = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Recordset")
          strSQL = "SELECT * FROM tblSentCards, tblPostcards WHERE tblSentCards.postcardID =
tblPostcards.postcardID AND cardID = " & cardID
          rsCard.open strSQL, conn
          if rscard.eof then
                    nocard = true
          end if
end if
%><!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
          "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">

<html>
<head>
<title>Your card</title>
<link href="postcards.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" />
</head>

<body>
```

8 If the variable nocard is true, print a message to the user to let them know there's a problem. If you don't do this, you'll get an error message when trying to display the card, as there is no record to display.

```
<%if nocard = true then %>
<div id="content">
<p>Sorry! We couldn't find that card</p>
</div>
```

9 If nocard does not equal true, we must have a card to display. Display the card using the data within the record set to show the correct card design and the information that was added by the user when they created the card.

```
<%else%>
<div id="cardbox">
<p><strong>To: <%=rsCard("cardRecipName")%></strong></p>
<img src="postcards/<%=rsCard("postcardLocation")%>" alt="<%=rsCard("postcardTitle")%>" />
<p><%=rsCard("cardMessage")%>
<br /><strong>From: <%=rsCard("cardSenderName")%></strong></p>
</div>
<p>If you would like to send a card, <a href="select.asp">start here</a></p>
<%
end if
rsCard.close
set rsCard = Nothing
conn.close
Set conn = Nothing%>
</body>
</html>
```

CREATE A GUESTBOOK WITH ASP AND ACCESS

THE EXPERT: RACHEL ANDREW

Rachel is a director of Web development company edgeofmyseat.com (**www.edgeofmyseat.com**), and is currently a member of the Web Standards Project (**www.webstandards.org**). With years of Webmaster experience, she has co-written a number of books for Glasshaus (**www.glasshaus.com**) on Web development, the most recent of which was *Dreamweaver MX Design Projects*.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To create a simple guestbook application using ASP and Access

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED

One hour

ON THE DISC

Developer/ Tutorial files:
guestbook [folder]
dbGuestbook.mdb

CODING TIP

FORMATTING DATES IN VBSCRIPT

VBScript has built-in functions to make formatting dates easy. In this tutorial we use one of these functions to change our date from the Access default dd/mm/yyyy to long date format, for example Monday, February 23, 2004. The function we use here is called FormatDateTime. To use it you do FormatDateTime(yourDate, vbLongDate); replace yourDate with a date – in our case from the database. The advantage of using a long date is that there's no confusion between US and UK date formats. Other functions are Day(yourDate) =, which will return the day from a date, and similarly Month(yourDate) and year(yourDate).

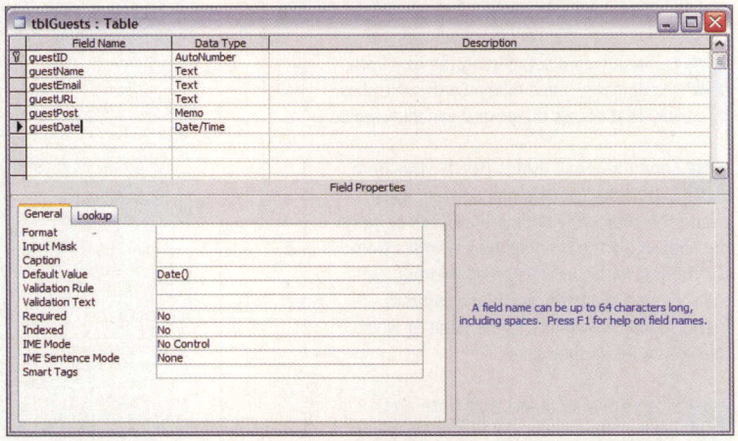
```
<br /><textarea name="guestPost" id="guestPost"
<p><input type="submit" name="btnPost" id="btnPo

</form>
<hr />
<h2>Guestbook Entries</h2>
<%
Set rs = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Recordset")
strSQL = "SELECT * FROM tblGuests ORDER BY guest
rs.open strSQL, conn
Do While Not rs.eof
%>
<p><%=rs("guestPost")%>
<br />Posted By: <a href="mailto:<%=rs("guestEma
%><%=FormatDateTime(rs("guestDate"), vbLongDate)%>
<%
```

A guestbook is simply a way for visitors to your site to leave a message which is viewable by you and other visitors. On your personal site they can be a great way for visitors to interact with you and fellow visitors. Creating a guestbook is also a simple way to get started with the basics of database development, as the database and ASP code we'll be using are very straightforward and yet show some useful basic techniques that you'll need in order to understand far more complex applications.

It will be necessary for you to have IIS installed on your computer to test the guestbook locally – and to upload the file and database to your host, you'll need to have a Web host that supports ASP and Access databases. ASP pages cannot simply be opened in a browser in the same way as a standard HTML page can. An ASP page (or any page that contains server-side script) has to be processed by the server first, and any database content added before the page is sent to the browser.

Our first step is to create the database table that will store the guestbook entries. Open Access and create a new database named 'dbGuestbook'. Double-click on Create Table in Design View and create your table. The fields we need to create are 'guestID', 'guestName', 'guestEmail', 'guestURL', 'guestPost' and 'guestDate'. The field guestID is an AutoNumber field and should also be the Primary Key; guestName, guestEmail and guestURL are all Text, with a length of 200. The field guestPost should be set to 'Memo', and finally, guestDate should be set to 'Date/Time' and given a default value of Date(). Save this table as 'tblGuests'.

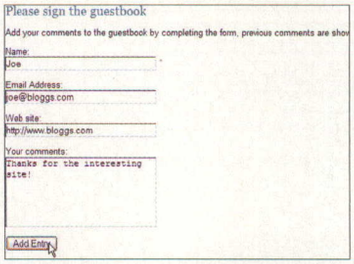


■ The guestbook retrieves its data from one table in an Access database, which contains all of the guestbook form fields

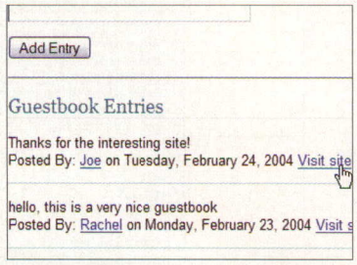
Once we have our database, we are ready to start to use it to store our guestbook entries. The guestbook consists of a single ASP script. The first thing we need to do in the script is connect to this database so we can insert entries into it and retrieve entries to display on the page. The type of connection we're using is a connection string that points to the physical location of the database on the computer. When you upload to your Web host you will need to change the location to be correct for the hosting server.

Once we have created our guestbook, visitors will come to the page, and at the top they will see the form they can complete in order to 'sign' the guestbook. Underneath that are the entries that have already been added to the guestbook. The visitor completes the form and submits it. The page reloads, first inserting the new entry into the database and then retrieving all the entries – including our new one – and displaying them.

Because the entries are displayed in date order, most recent first, the new entry should be at the top of the page so that the user will know it's been posted. ■



■ A visitor to the site completes their entry, and can add their name, email address and URL alongside their comments


Add Entry
Guestbook Entries
Thanks for the interesting site!
Posted By: Joe on Tuesday, February 24, 2004 Visit site
hello, this is a very nice guestbook
Posted By: Rachel on Monday, February 23, 2004 Visit s

■ After posting the form, the new guestbook entry appears in the list of entries and can be read by visitors

THE CODE

DESCRIPTION

Now that you've got the general idea, let's roll up our sleeves and get to work:

1 We start our ASP page by declaring the scripting language we're working in, which is VBScript, and declaring the variables we're going to use in the script.

```
<%@LANGUAGE = "VBSCRIPT" %>
<%Option Explicit%>
<%
Dim conn, rs, strSQL, guestName, guestEmail, guestURL, guestPost
```

2 Connect to the database. Change C:\path\to\dbGuestbook.mdb to the path of the location of your dbGuestbook.mdb file.

```
Set conn = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
conn.Open "Provider=Microsoft.Jet.OLEDB.4.0;" & _
                "Data Source=C:\ path\to\dbGuestbook.mdb;"
```

3 If the form has been posted, we first write out the variables in the form POST to variables, replacing any single quotes with two quotes to escape them. An unescaped single quote will cause an error if you insert it directly into the database. We then create a string of SQL that contains the variables and insert it into the database.

```
if Request.Form("btnPost") > "" Then
        guestName = Replace(Request.Form("guestName"), "'", "''")
        guestEmail = Replace(Request.Form("guestEmail"), "'", "''")
        guestURL = Replace(Request.Form("guestURL"), "'", "''")
        guestPost = Replace(Request.Form("guestPost"), "'", "''")
        strSQL = "INSERT INTO tblGuests (guestName, guestEmail, guestURL, guestPost) VALUES ('" &
guestName & "','" & guestEmail & "','" & guestURL & "','" & guestPost & "')"
        conn.execute(strSQL)
end if
%>
```

4 Now we open our HTML page as normal. This is what the user will see – even if they view source, they won't see the ASP code.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
        "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">

<html>
<head>
<title>Please sign the guestbook</title>
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="gb.css" />
</head>

<body>
```

5 The guestbook form contains all the fields in our database table except guestID, as that is an AutoNumber inserted by Access, and guestDate, as we're entering that automatically to be the date the user posts to the guestbook.

```
<h1>Please sign the guestbook</h1>
<p>Add your comments to the guestbook by completing the form, previous comments are shown below
the form.</p>
<form method="post" action="guestbook.asp">
<p>Name:
<br /><input type="text" name="guestName" id="guestName" class="txt" /></p>
<p>Email Address:
<br /><input type="text" name="guestEmail" id="guestEmail" class="txt" /></p>
<p>Web site:
<br /><input type="text" name="guestURL" id="guestURL" class="txt" /></p>
<p>Your comments:
<br /><textarea name="guestPost" id="guestPost" class="txtlarge"></textarea></p>
<p><input type="submit" name="btnPost" id="btnPost" value="Add Entry" /></p>

</form>
<hr />
```

6 We're now going to display the guestbook entries we've collected in the database.

```
<h2>Guestbook Entries</h2>
<%
```

7 To display the entries, we create a record set – which is simply the information in rows pulled from the database. It can be one table of data, selected rows from a table, or two or more tables joined. Our record set is simply everything from the table tblGuests.

```
Set rs = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Recordset")
strSQL = "SELECT * FROM tblGuests ORDER BY guestDate DESC"
rs.open strSQL, conn
```

8 We then loop through the rows in the table. For each row we display the post, the user's name and email address, and the date. If the user has entered a Web site address we display a link to their site as well.

```
Do While Not rs.eof
%>
<p><%=rs("guestPost")%>
<br />Posted By: <a href="mailto:<%=rs("guestEmail")%>"><%=rs("guestName")%></a> on
<%=FormatDateTime(rs("guestDate"), vbLongDate)%>
<%
if rs("guestURL") > "" Then%>
<a href="<%=rs("guestURL")%>">Visit site</a>
<% end if%></p>
<hr class="gb" />
<%
rs.MoveNext
loop
```

9 At the end of the script we close and destroy the record set and connection objects, so they don't continue to consume system resources.

```
rs.close
set rs = nothing
conn.close
set conn = nothing
%>

</body>
</html>
```

Coolcraw

DIGITAL BRAND

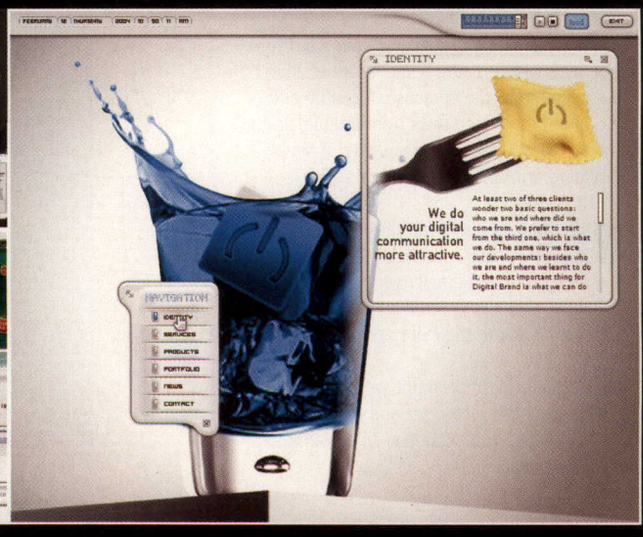
NEWS
02.05.2004
DigitalBrand in Coolhomepages!
Finally we became part of the most important web gallery on Internet: We thank it members for including and qualifying us with eight stars.
Cool HomePages.com
The best place for design ideas
NEXT>>
open me
Digital Brand
DESKTOP
1 2 3 4 CHANGE

Name: Digital Brand
URL: www.digitalbrand.com.ar
Designed by: Digital Brand

There may be many URLs on the Web that showcase great art, but sadly not quite so many that can be considered masterpieces themselves. Digital Brand's site, which promotes the agency's digital marketing services, is a rare exception that would leave any envious designer drooling. Built around its own customisable desktop, it features swappable photographic wallpapers, while menus for navigation and viewing content can be floated about the screen. The minimal style and clever use of striking colour is a masterclass in catching the eye – in the same way as the sprinkling of audio keeps you listening. ■

BRAND NEW

You access the site's content via a main menu component that tracks the cursor around the page. From here you can launch windows containing portfolios, products or news updates, all against a choice of four gorgeous backdrops.



GALLERY

SUBMISSIONS

SEND YOUR SITES TO US

Have you got a site or a piece of artwork you've created that you'd like to see featured on these pages? If you're reading this thinking that you've done better, please drop us a line and we'll showcase your work to our like-minded readers. It doesn't matter if you're a Flash guru or a Photoshop master – as long as you've created something cool and visually appealing, we'll cover your work in here. Who knows what it could lead to?

CONTACT:

Web Designer
Highbury Entertainment Limited,
Paragon House,
St Peters Road,
Bournemouth, BH1 2JS

Email: webdesigner@paragon.co.uk

ATAVUS.SYNTETYK

Name: atavus.syntetyk
URL: hyper.aktywni.pl
Designed by: Tomasz Pawilowski

Although little is known about the Polish wizard behind this stunning digital gallery, the awesome artwork on display speaks volumes. The 21-year-old graphical designer only really claims to be a 'dominant introvert', favouring a back seat to the substantial collection of abstract and vibrant renderings. From what seems to be sci-fi-inspired flyer designs to striking textural landscapes, the images convey an organic aesthetic that is highly realistic. A great use of lighting and rendering effects really lifts the content from the page, which itself features some great animated buttons and multimedia effects. ■

IMAGE CONSCIOUS

Visitors can browse through the whole collection of artwork by simply clicking the corresponding buttons below. Everything has been designed to fit into the overall scheme, which employs brooding colours to elevate the images.

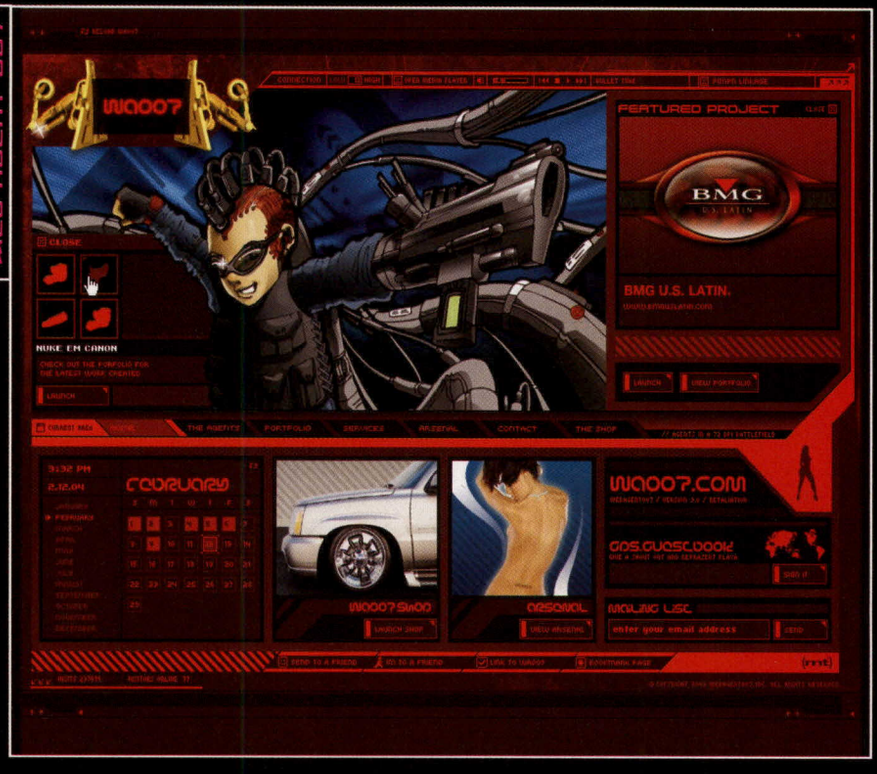
Name: Name: Web Agent 007
URL: www.webagent007.com
Designed by: Web Agent 007

If James Bond ever thought about giving up his international spy career to pursue a life in Web design, he'd certainly fit in here. This front-end for the band of super-cool digital consultants known as the Web Agents deliberately utilises the playboy culture to create a distinctive brand image. The tongue-in-cheek collage of cars, girls and guns is expertly woven into an interface that doesn't stop flickering and whirring with activity. Animated menus, dynamic graphics and a brilliantly presented portfolio of commercial work make this one of the Web's trendiest exponents. ■

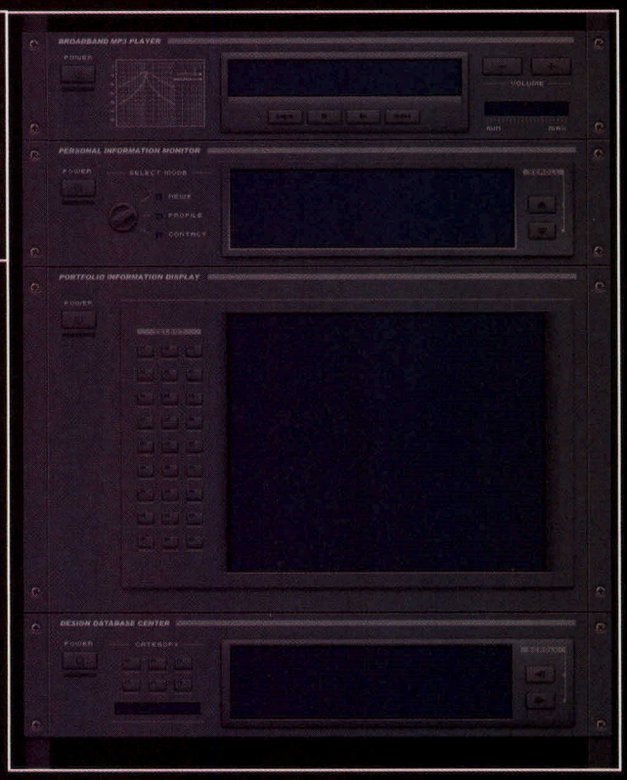
LICENSED TO THRILL

One of the best things this site manages to do is fulfil multiple purposes. Its overall design capitalises on a number of cultural devices to not only promote the agency behind it, but also connect with visitors on a number of levels.

WEB AGENT 007



ONE OF A KIND



Name: One of a Kind
URL: www.1ofakind.com.br
Designed by: Mauricio R. Gouvea

When most of us think of a Web page we probably envisage the typical tabular layout of margins, links and text. Credit therefore has to go to authors like Mauricio Gouvea who attempt to rethink the way sites should look and feel. One of a Kind consists of a stack of interactive modules modelled on the separate components of a hi-fi stereo. Each one behaves accordingly and features various button panels that can be pressed to load content into the many displays. You can even listen to MP3 tracks as you read about the author's background or follow links to examples of his previous work. ■

SOUND WORK

All of the many simulated parts of the stereo operate independently and can be switched on or off as a result. The buttons and LCD screens are really well drawn and presented, which supplies the authenticity needed.

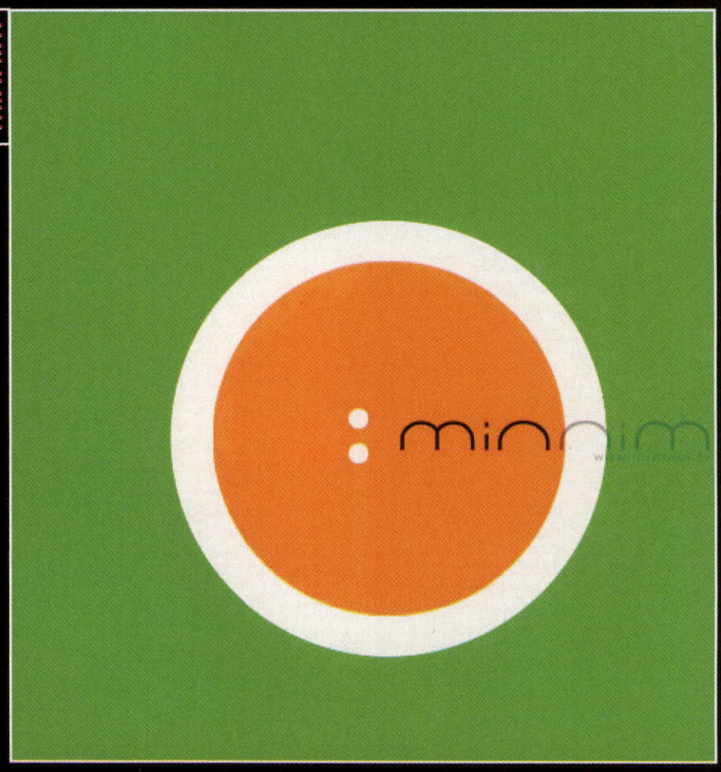
Name: Minnim
URL: www.minnim.tv
Designed by: Unknown

More and more pages are starting to use Flash-powered elements to give their navigational systems a real wow factor. This site, by the name of 'Minnim', is conspicuous by its author's anonymity and its fairly sparse design, although the experience of using its unique menu is worth a visit alone. All the content, which ranges from abstract photography to T-shirt designs, is retrievable only via a simulated desktop PC. Everything is kept wonderfully compact on the small monitor, although icons, windows and a superb music player all work beautifully. ■

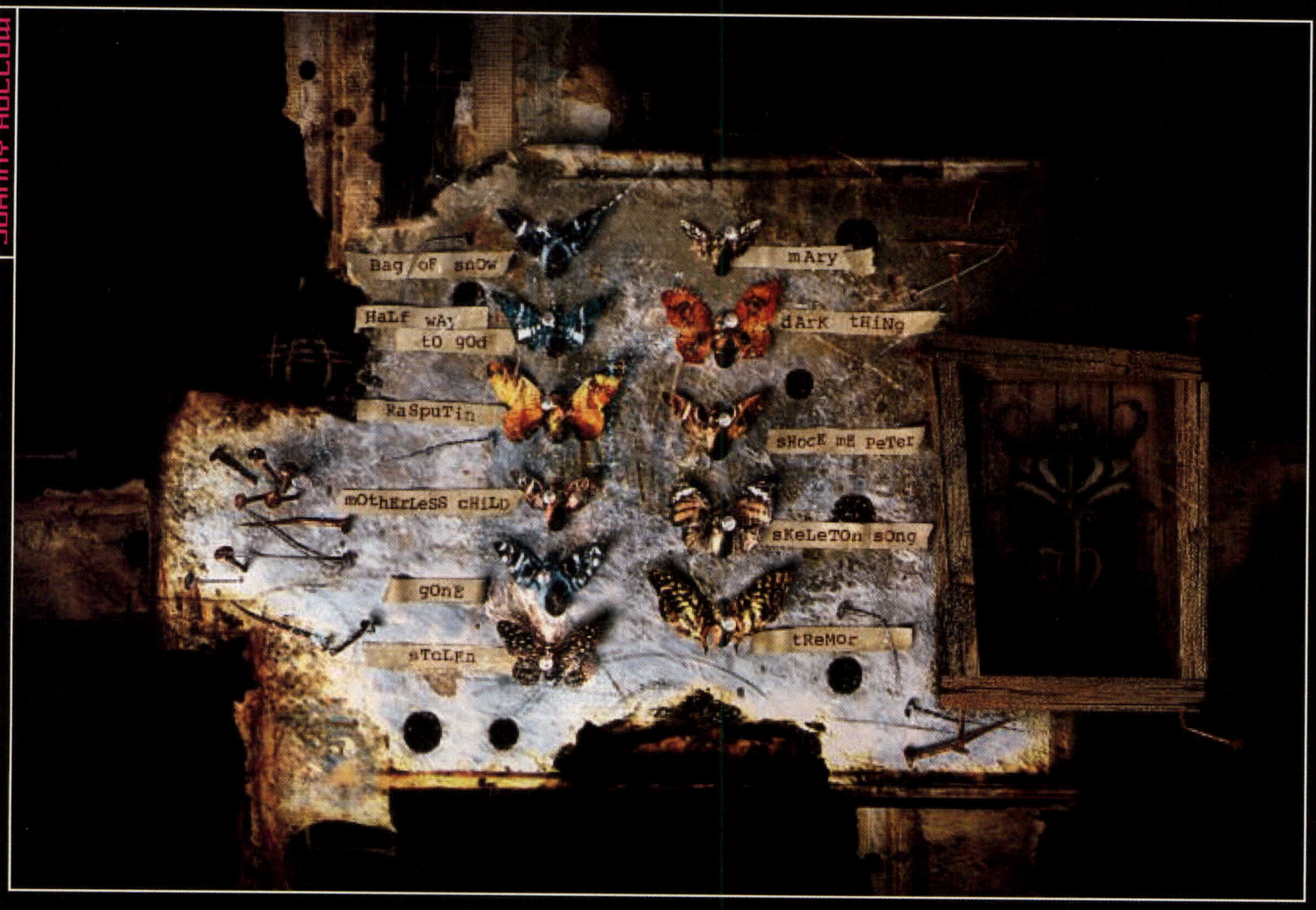
DESKTOP TROUBLE

Replicating a desktop on such a small scale is what sets this site's navigation system apart. Notice also the clever graphical effects on show, such as the mouse that moves with your cursor and the excellent screen reflections below.

minnim



JOHNNY HOLLOW

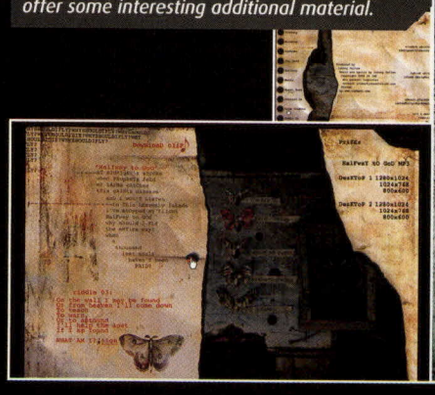


Name: Johnny Hollow
URL: www.johnnyhollow.com
Designed by: Johnny Hollow

When classically trained musicians Janine White and Kitty Thompson met up with graphic design guru Vincent Marcone, the band Johnny Hollow was born. The Canadian-based trio have gone on to create various audio-visual collaborations, including albums and this unique site. Their Gothic influences have been beautifully interpreted with an atmospheric array of imagery and animation. Visitors are encouraged to 'win' content like MP3s and wallpapers by answering cryptic riddles, while song lyrics and band biographies are all freely available. The result is an effort that truly emphasises how an original yet simple idea can go a long way. ■

SELLING POINT

It could be seen as risky, asking users to unlock content, as many may give up in frustration. But this is actually the selling point of Johnny Hollow, and the writers have used it well to offer some interesting additional material.



eCOMMERCE

eCOMMERCE

Profiting on the Web

Making cash from your Web site is a common goal throughout the wired world. From multinational conglomerates through to one man band craft-makers, the ideal is the same: converting visitors into buyers.

The eCommerce section in *Web Designer* is designed specifically for people aiming to turn clicks into pounds (or dollars, or yen). This means that every month, we provide essential information for the decision-makers who shape their businesses' future.

eBusiness is much more than selling your wares online, though, which is why we also strive to include tips and tricks for anyone who is keen to get their business or design portfolio online.

IN THIS ISSUE'S eCOMMERCE SECTION

Learning from the big boys 100
Discover the commonsense tricks and techniques used on the big eCommerce sites that you should be taking note of right now

eCommerce tutorial: part seven.....104
In the seventh part of our ten-part tutorial, we further expand our store built in osCommerce

Web hosting deals 110
Pick yourself the perfect Web hosting deal with our comprehensive listings section

This issue's eCommerce tutorial shows you how to start building up that valuable online community

CONTACT US:

Do you have a topic you'd like to see covered in eCommerce? Get in touch at:

Web Designer
Highbury Entertainment Limited,
Paragon House,
St Peter's Road,
Bournemouth, BH1 2JS

Email: webdesigner@paragon.co.uk

LEARNING FROM THE BIG BOYS ON THE WEB

There's big money to be made on the Web, and who better to learn from than those who've already been there and done it?

When the mundane trawl of a nine-to-five slot in the office, the factory or the pit gets a little too much, it's difficult to resist those daydreams of relaxing on a luxury yacht in the Caribbean with a team of servants at your beck and call and enough money in the bank to buy New Zealand.

We've all thought about how to make our millions – lottery wins, bank jobs, bumping into a rich benefactor who instantly falls in love with us... Ultimately though, the most practical fortune-making solution is to use your skills, ambition and drive to bring the dream to life yourself by setting up your own business. And where better to start making your mark than online, where countless ambitious folk have taken delivery of their yachts as the result of tapping into the money-making power of the Web. World-renowned online stores such as Amazon, Lastminute.com and Expedia were all formed in garages, bedrooms and sheds, and have gone on to make their founders rich beyond their wildest dreams and proved that a good idea can take you a long way.

"THE MOST PRACTICAL FORTUNE-MAKING SOLUTION IS TO USE YOUR SKILLS, AMBITION AND DRIVE TO BRING THE DREAM TO LIFE"

Right, now for the bad news – most of the good ideas have already been thought up and implemented by others on the Web, so let's not have any illusions that you're going to turn the world of Internet-based business on its head with your revolutionary plan. Don't let this put you off, though. The fact that there are already online businesses catering for every whim means you can learn from those who've made it big, and heed the mistakes of those whose ideas have got off the ground about as well as Eddie the Eagle on crutches. We'll explain how to learn from the Amazons of this world in order to get your eCommerce site off the ground, and you'll be saying goodbye to your humdrum working life in no time.

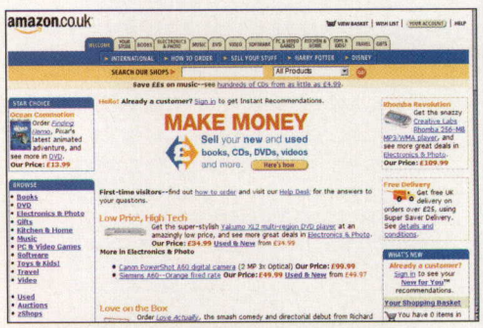
Tricks of the trade

The harsh reality of doing business on the Web is that your customers have the ability to flee your site and run off to the competition at the mere click of a button, so it's vital to give them something worth sticking around for. The very best eCommerce sites employ a number of intelligent tactics in their designs to make the user's experience as pleasant and intuitive as possible. Just as they do on the high street, customers are looking to be in control of their shopping experience, and want to be able to find what they're looking for in a way that feels natural to them.

The popularity of virtually all successful eCommerce sites such as Amazon (**www.amazon.co.uk**) and Dabs (**www.dabs.com**) is born out of a well-ordered structure, where products are clearly divided into sections which are clearly labelled in the main navigation panel, then sub-divided in navigation strips on the side of each main section. This helps customers know exactly where they are within the shop, just as they would look on the signs above each aisle of a supermarket to direct them to the right items.

Just as important for a Web-based store is a search facility, which if done properly gives eCommerce sites the edge on real-world shops. Especially for sites that stock thousands of products such as Dabs (**www.dabs.com**), it's crucial to have a 'Search This Site' box on the front page, so customers needn't trawl through the catalogue in frustration. When implementing a search facility, it's also important to support non-product keywords that relate to things like 'payment', 'shipping', 'returns policy', etc to address customer's pre- and post-sale needs.

There are plenty of other neat tricks that big online retailers use to win over customers, such as adding product



The Amazon Web site has a well-ordered structure, so customers know exactly where they are and can navigate with ease

EXPERT TIPS AND TRICKS

WINNING TIPS

FIVE SURE-FIRE WAYS TO CREATE A WINNING ECOMMERCE SITE – AND BEAT THE BIG BOYS IN THE PROCESS

- Make your site as easy to use as possible. It sounds obvious, but if you present your customers with a front-end they can navigate intuitively, they're more likely to stick around and check out your products
- Consider making shipping free. Customers like to feel they're getting something for nothing, so even if it means raising the price of your products slightly, they'll be drawn towards free delivery
- Keep customers informed at all times. For items you don't currently have in stock, display the date when the product will become available, and allow them to track their orders online
- Ensure that customers can search your site instantly. Punters won't always be inclined to trawl through your entire product range to find what they want, so make sure you include a facility on the home page where they can enter a keyword to direct them straight to the product they're looking for
- Foster an online community. Use devices such as product reviews, forums and email newsletters to make the customer feel part of your site and provide an incentive for them to return – other than the need to buy a product

CD WOW! (**www.cdwow.com**) is an excellent example of a site that provides the customer with plenty of choice. This eCommerce site has become hugely popular, thanks mainly to the sheer range of products on offer

comparison tools to the store. This is particularly well done by sites which stock products that are fairly similar, like Hewlett Packard (**www.hp.com**), which empowers its customers to make informed buying decisions by giving them the facts about each product in a legible manner.

Winning the trust of the customer is the mantra by which all major eCommerce sites operate, and gaining the punters' confidence can be as simple as ensuring that your site loads quickly, that there are no broken links or missing images, and that you reassure them of security and customer policies.

Holding hands with your customer

If there's one thing the big boys of online business do well, it's customer support. A disgruntled or confused customer is only likely to get more disgruntled or confused if you neglect to provide an outlet for them to raise their concerns or find answers to their questions. Most big retailers that have existed in the offline market for some time already have the infrastructure in place to offer telephone support to online customers, which is ultimately the most effective form of appeasing the punters. However, if your budget doesn't stretch this far you can make up for it by offering comprehensive online support. Dell's online support section (**support.dell.com**) is second to none, and allows customers to get the information they need through a variety of mechanisms, including an extensive Knowledge Base, customer forums, email support, FAQs and reference guides. eBay (**www.ebay.co.uk**) foregoes telephone support completely, such is the scope of its comprehensive online Help section – and it also has a strong customer community who help each other via email or the Web.

Community service

eBay has proved that the community aspect of a Web site can really help drive sales, and its 'User Feedback' facility has helped to inspire the kind of trust from its market that would never have been possible otherwise. Besides acting as a deterrent to sellers or buyers looking to pull off dirty deals, this feature brings people together on the site, helping to build friendships and partnerships around the world and offering a reason for people to come to the site other than just to shop. Likewise, Amazon's Product Reviews section promotes the kind of interaction with customers that's unheard of in the outside world, and gives the site added value.

Their wish is your command

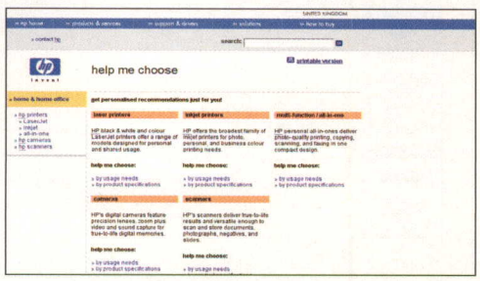
Considering that 'the customer is always right', it's amazing how many businesses dismiss their punters as a lot of whingers and plough on regardless. Ask anyone involved in the shaping of a successful eCommerce site and they'll give you tales of how vital it is to listen to your customers and develop your site based on the feedback you get from them. For instance, the introduction of one of Amazon's most profitable product lines was the result of nattering with the public over what they wanted to see.

As Robin Terill, the managing director of Amazon.co.uk says: "We get a huge amount of feedback from customers, which is really appreciated, and this is used to help further develop the company." The company has also integrated many other features based on what Joe Public has been saying, including the handy 'Wish List' function, where customers can build up a listing of products they'd like to order and track their availability over a period of time. The company's 'can-do' attitude is to be admired, and it pays close attention to smaller details as well as sweeping changes to the site. Adding features such as free delivery when orders haven't been fulfilled properly first time around inspires just as much confidence from the consumer as the continued introduction of new product lines.

In terms of the logistics of listening to your customers, Lastminute.com (**www.lastminute.com**) has implemented many new ideas based on the ramblings of customers that use its 'Help Us Improve' section. Here, punters are encouraged to choose a section of the site

DELL
DELL SUPPORT
Welcome to Dell Support, your online home for technical support and customer care regarding your Dell system.

Dell's online support system enables customers to access the info they want in several ways, including customer forums, email and FAQs



At the Hewlett Packard Web site, **www.hp.com**, customers are able to compare product information quickly and easily

TEN THINGS TO AVOID

THINGS TO AVOID

GIVE THESE TEN NO-GO AREAS A MISS IF YOU WANT YOUR BUSINESS TO SUCCEED

- Don't hide product prices. If the cost of your goods isn't clear from the outset, customers will start asking questions
- Don't advertise unavailable products. There's nothing more frustrating to a customer than a product that can't be bought
- Don't bury the catalogue deep within the site. Allow customers to buy from your home page
- Don't force customers to register with your site in order to start buying from you
- Avoid sticking to one payment method – give customers a range of ways to purchase
- Don't assume that customers want to receive email marketing on spec. Give them the choice to opt into/out of your newsletter
- Avoid jargon and clever names in your product descriptions. Unfamiliar words are sure to put people off
- Don't stick to just one image of a product. Try to provide alternative views of an item to give the customer a better impression of what they're buying
- Don't give out too much detail about a product at once. Consider layering the information through a series of links
- Don't set up a site like Amazon and expect to start making money instantly. It takes time to get known and build up customer loyalty

I DID IT: CONCORDE COLLECTABLES

While Concorde may have made its last passenger flight, this supersonic memorabilia site is cashing in on its name to take on the big boys of the eCommerce world.

Launched in early 2003, Concorde Collectables (**www.concordecollectables.com**) is run by Nick Bloomer, who sells 25 genuine items via a mix of his Actinic-powered store and eBay auctions. Products include VIP giveaways, flight folders, flight certificates, stationery and photographic prints taken by BA's official Concorde photographer.

Recent interest among Concorde enthusiasts since the demise of the aircraft has seen the number of visitors soar to 20,000 a week, with 600 converting to sales and an average spend of £75-£150. Turnover is now on target for over £1 million within the last 12 months, as the site really begins to, er, take off...

they'd like to see changed and then submit their suggestions online. Of course, it's all very well setting this kind of system up, but you must ensure you have the means to take on board these suggestions and make changes as necessary, and if this involves dropping your other plans in order to get this done as quickly as possible, you should be prepared to do this.

You don't even need to implement such a rigid customer feedback system to start listening to your customers, and many top eCommerce sites gauge feedback from customers who come through their support channels. After all, if a customer is contacting you to report a complaint or request more information, this is a perfect chance to discover what's going wrong with your business or what's not clear on your site.

The hard sell

It's all well and good having a slickly designed site that's been shaped by listening carefully to your customers, but without any products it's useless. eCommerce sites such as CD WOW! (**www.cdwow.com**) have become popular due to the sheer range of products they stock, and it's important to offer consumers plenty of choice. Of course, you need to be able to meet demand, so it's important to ensure you have enough of each product in stock to fill orders. If your budget means sacrificing selection to make sure you have enough of your most popular products in stock, so be it. A limited range of products is less of a drawback for a Web store if its users know the site is just a small business, as they won't have the same expectations as they would of a retail giant.

If you aren't able to fill an order due to the product not being in stock, it's important to offer a facility for ordering in the goods and letting customers track their orders, as on sites like Gateway Computers (**www.gateway.com**).

Of course, most customers choose where to buy a product based on its price, so it's crucial to try and keep your prices as low as possible if you're going to compete in a market where sites can offer rock-bottom deals due to fewer overheads. If you find it impossible to compete on certain products with your rivals, you may want to consider working with them to provide a link for customers to buy through them in order to earn you commission. Cheapflights (**www.cheapflights.co.uk**) has made a success of this, as it takes a slice of every sale made through the various airlines and tour operators it links to.

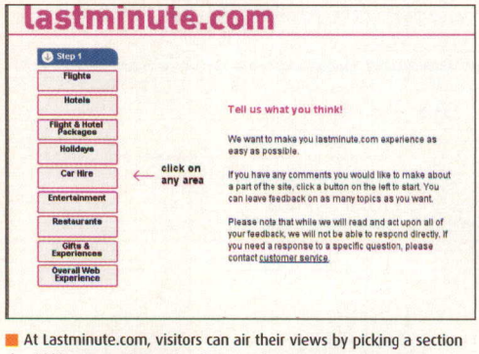
"WHEN IT COMES TO FORMULATING A PLAN OF YOUR OWN, YOU WON'T GET FAR WITHOUT A DECENT BUSINESS IDEA"

Another crucial aspect of selling online is the ability to diversify your product offering very quickly. Part of Amazon's success is based on its willingness to add completely new product lines to its bookstore, like electronics, home entertainment and clothing. To a lesser extent, Tesco.com (**www.tesco.com**) has improved its eCommerce offering by supplying products other than groceries such as books, CDs, DVDs and flowers.

Hatching an idea

While you can learn a lot by keeping tabs on what the giants of eCommerce have achieved and how they've done it, when it comes to formulating a plan of your own you won't get far without a decent business idea. Even if you release a site that works ten times better than Amazon and eBay put together, no one will come to it if it sells holey socks or waxwork fireguards. The key to formulating the perfect idea is to find something unique that fills a gap in the market, or which uses the Web to deliver a customer experience impossible to achieve offline.

There are no hard and fast rules governing the process of thinking up an idea, but there are plenty of places you can go for inspiration. Whether you're walking up the high street, thumbing through the Yellow Pages to work out which kind of outlets have yet to be successfully translated to the Web, or performing a search on Google for an area you're looking to expand into, you can exploit the business world to find out what works. Once the light bulb hovers over your head, you're ready to take on the big Web-based businesses and prepare yourself for dotcom glory. ■


lastminute.com
Step 1
Flights
Hotels
Flight & Hotel Packages
Holidays
Car Hire
Entertainment
Restaurants
Gifts & Experiences
Overall Web Experience
click on any area
Tell us what you think!
We want to make you lastminute.com experience as easy as possible.
If you have any comments you would like to make about a part of the site, click a button on the left to start. You can leave feedback on as many topics as you want.
Please note that while we will read and act upon all of your feedback, we will not be able to respond directly. If you need a response to a specific question, please contact customer service.

■ At Lastminute.com, visitors can air their views by picking a section they'd like to see changed and then submitting their suggestions online

■ **www.tesco.com** has broadened its appeal by offering products such as books, CDs, DVDs and flowers, apart from the traditional groceries

Straightforward Hosting

Just what you need

- Unlimited email aliases
- 15 POP3 email boxes
- Antivirus & Antispam support
- Graphical website visitor stats
- Minimum 100MB fast web space on all accounts
- Free expert technical support by telephone and email

Everyday

.html, .cgi, .pl
SSI
Password protected pages
Perl CGI
FrontPage 2002

£9.99 per mth

PHP

.html, .php, .php4
SSI
ODBC
PHPMyAdmin
MySQL database

£14.99 per mth

ASP

.html, .asp
ASPEmail
ASPEasyZip
ASPUpload
Access database

£14.99 per mth

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Helix powered
Windows & Real Media
Flash
Broadcast support

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.html, .asp, .aspx
.NET Framework v1.1
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.html, .cfm
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Access database

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Java+

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Shared instance
Context support
Struts support
MySQL database

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Java++

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Private JVM
Tomcat manager
Struts support
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TUTORIAL: eCOMMERCE
TURN YOUR STORE INTO AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

THE EXPERT: JAMES SEABRIGHT

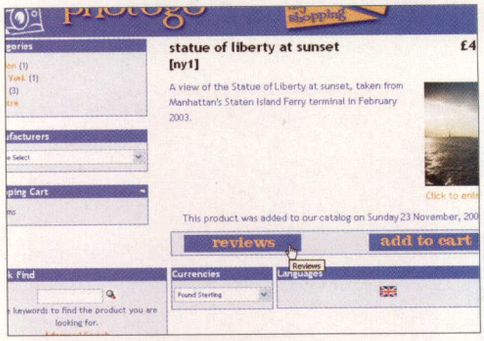
James is a freelance Web designer and writer who specialises in hand coding. He is a former Technical Editor of *Practical Internet*, and has been writing for the magazine since 1997. We picked James to write the eCommerce tutorial because, spanning ten issues, it will call upon many aspects of Web design – and with his experience and multitude of skills, James was the perfect choice.

Random reviews
Randomly selected customer reviews will appear in this customised infobox

Reviews
Customers can see all reviews for a product by clicking here

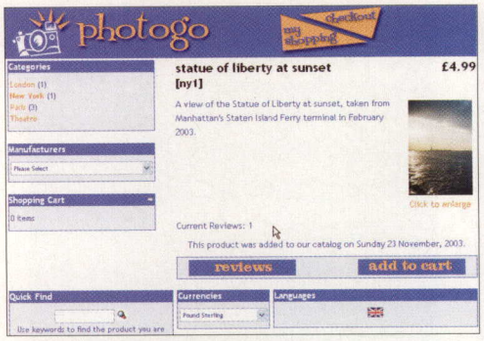
Tell a friend
Allow customers to notify friends about products via email

Linking products
Link between products with this panel, using custom-sized thumbnails to illustrate



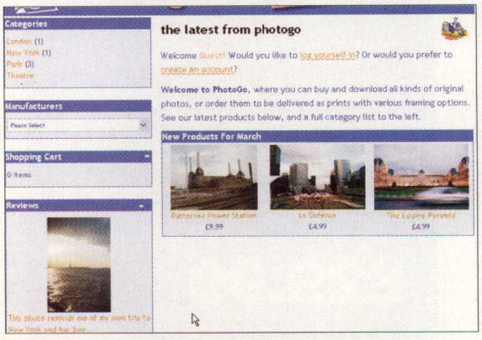
1 PRODUCT REVIEWS

One of the integral features of osCommerce allows registered site users to submit reviews of products with a star rating. To see how this works, let's write one. Go to any product page and click on the Reviews button, which is located to the left of the Add to Cart button.



4 OMNIPRESENT REVIEWS

On returning to the product page, the number of reviews of the product is now shown, but there's no more detail. This is because when we designed the page template we chose to leave out the Reviews infobox, as we had no reviews at that time. So let's look now at how to revive it.



7 CHECKING THE REVIEWS BOX

If you load up any page of your shopping site now, the Reviews infobox should appear in the place you just specified for it in the template. As you can see here, the default version of the infobox includes an image which unbalances the look of the page, so let's rework its design.

PART SEVEN

TURN YOUR STORE INTO AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Use osCommerce to get customers to interact more with your site

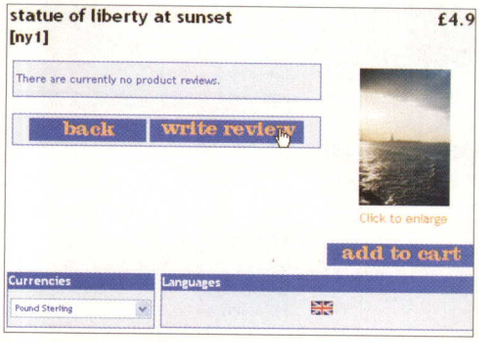
SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
90 minutes

Discover how to use osCommerce's customer reviews and Tell A Friend features

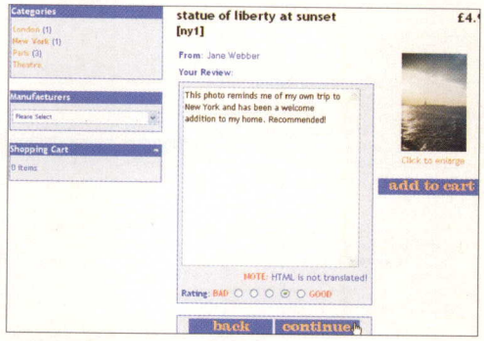
Welcome back to this tutorial series on setting up an eCommerce site with the free software suite, osCommerce. New readers are welcome to plunge in at the deep end by installing the software from **www.oscommerce.com**, although you may want to get hold of a back issue – particularly issue 86, in which our first episode appeared.

For this seventh instalment in our tutorial on osCommerce, we're thinking about how to get customers more involved with the site, and how to make the most of links between products on your site to help with cross-selling them to customers. Luckily, osCommerce has all the features you need to do this built into its powerful basic configuration, so there are no complicated software installations to be tackled this issue – a welcome change from last issue's wrestling with secure servers. We've mentioned some of the features covered in earlier issues of the tutorial, but only in passing. This time we look at how they can each be customised to suit the particular needs of your site, by editing the code used to make up the infoboxes and pages the customer sees on your site.



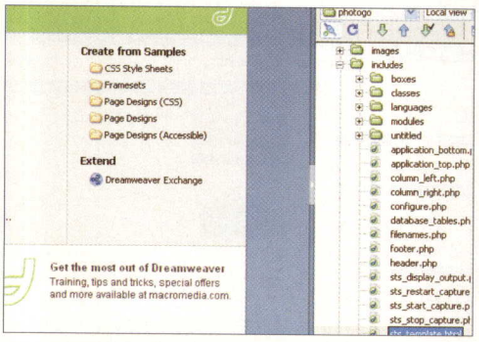
2 REVIEW SUMMARY PAGE

When reviews exist, they're listed on this page. At the moment there's nothing to see here – so let's correct that by writing one. Click Add a Review to do this. You'll need to be logged in as a registered user of the site to write a review, so if you're not, the login prompt will appear next.



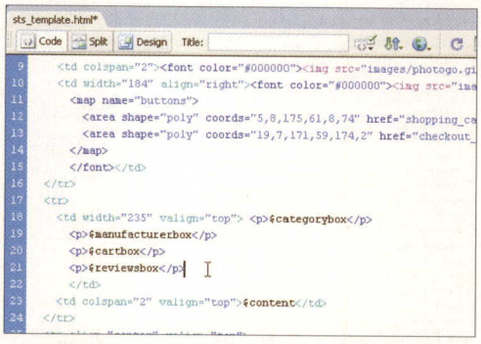
3 WRITING A REVIEW

When you write a review, there's space for a text comment and a quality rating, which will be translated into a star rating out of five. The minimum permitted length of the text comment can be changed within the Admin control panel – we'll look in a moment at how to do that.



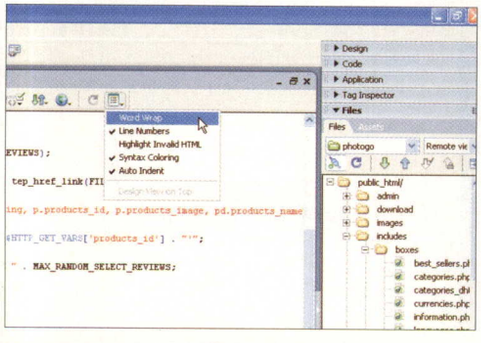
5 ALTERING THE PAGE TEMPLATE

This relies on having Simple Template System (STS) installed (see issue 87). If you have the standard osCommerce template in place, the Reviews infobox is probably on your site. To alter the STS template, use Dreamweaver to open sts_template.html from the Includes folder.



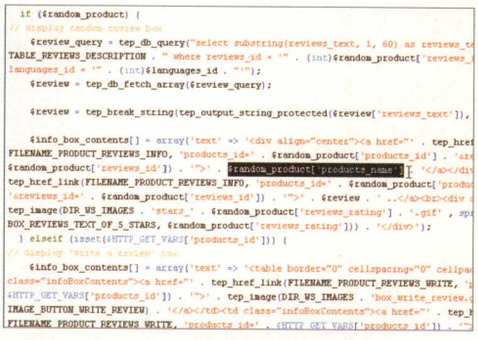
6 ADDING THE REVIEWS INFOBOX

Where you enter the code for the Reviews infobox depends on your template design, but we've put ours just underneath the Cart Summary infobox by adding the code $reviewsbox at the bottom of the left-hand column of the page. When you've edited yours, save the file.



8 EDITING THE REVIEWS INFOBOX

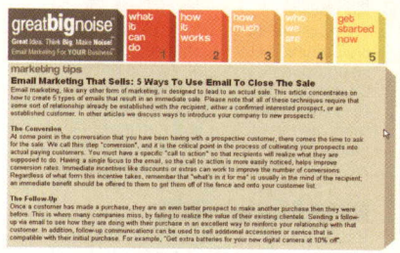
In Dreamweaver, open the file includes/boxes/reviews.php via the Files panel, ensuring you're in Remote View mode. In the button bar at the top of the Document window, click on the button on the right-hand edge of the bar, and select Word Wrap from the menu that pops up.



9 ADDING THE PRODUCT NAME

Now for a few steps of fiddly code editing. In the section starting $info_box_contents, look for the code section beginning 'tep_image' and ending 'SMALL_IMAGE_HEIGHT)'. Delete that code, except for the part highlighted above – $random_product['products_name'].

BOOKMARKS



GREAT BIG NOISE

www.greatbignoise.com/articles/EmailThatSells.asp

A set of five very useful tips here about how to make the most of email marketing, which you should consider when sending out newsletters and product updates.

HOME MEDIA KIT

homemediakit.com/internet-marketing-guide/Direct-Email Marketing/

This list of links will send you off towards some of the best online resources about email marketing, but beware – many of them will just be trying to sell you email address lists!

EXPERT ADVICE

KEEP AN EYE ON FEEDBACK

While it is a great idea to allow customers the opportunity to feel involved in your site by providing features such as reviews, you should also pay careful attention to monitor these contributions regularly. Visit the Admin control panel's reviews section to read all those that have been posted. Here you can delete any reviews you don't want to appear on the site, and also send emails to customers who have posted problematic reviews explaining why they've been removed. Luckily, only registered customers can post reviews, which provides a useful monitoring and tracking method for you. If you're concerned about rogue postings, you might want to remove the Reviews infobox from your page template, which would mean that reviews are only visible when the Reviews button on a product page is clicked.

GEEK SPEAK

INFOBOX

The edges of the osCommerce page template are dominated by so-called infoboxes, including Manufacturers, Shopping Cart Summary, Languages, Currencies, Tell A Friend and others. The contents of the infoboxes can be edited by changing the content of the relevant files in the includes/boxes directory, which is something we do quite a lot of in this issue's tutorial.

ADMIN CONTROL PANEL

This is the Web-based interface which you can use to alter many of osCommerce's settings. It is normally accessed by adding '/admin' onto the end of the address of your shop's site. We covered the subject of how to password protect the control panel in the Technique column of the first tutorial in this series, and that's something that's well worth referring back to in case you haven't protected the control panel. Obviously anyone who realises you're using osCommerce could access an unprotected Admin control panel and that would be a serious security problem, not to mention the issues relating to breach of customer confidentiality that it presents.

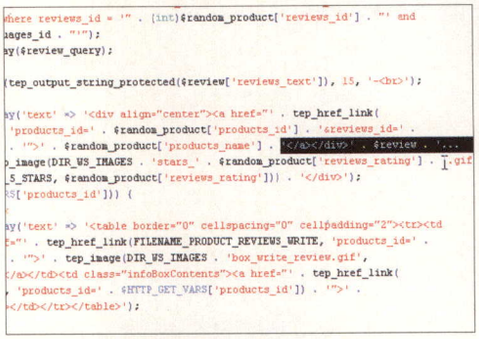
REGISTERED USER

The default settings of osCommerce require that to place an order a customer must become a registered user of the site. This involves completing a form detailing address and contact details, which are then recalled automatically on each successive login. The user has to enter their email address and a password of their choice on each visit to the site in order to log in. Certain other site features also demand that you're logged in, including writing reviews and the Tell A Friend function. As the site owner, you can view details of all registered users via the Admin control panel.

EXPERT ADVICE

IMAGE SIZING

In step 17, we alter the format of the Also Purchased box to use smaller image sizes than the default design. In case you were wondering why we didn't just specify the desired image size in pixels, there are two reasons. First of all, doing that would squash the image out of proportion, unless you're sure all images on your site will be in exact proportion between their width and height. This is why we changed it to make the maximum height of the image equal to the 'subcategory image sizes' specified in the Admin control panel. The width of the image was not set in the code, which actually leads osCommerce to calculate the correct width based on the proportions of the image. The other reason for not setting exact pixel amounts in the code is that it makes osCommerce less easily reconfigurable. The way we've done it, you can just change the subcategory image size in the Admin control panel, rather than having to edit the code manually.

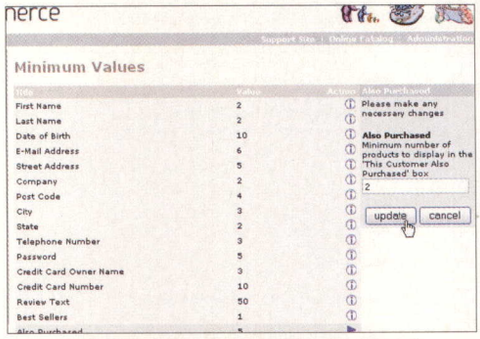


10 REMOVE THE HYPERLINK

In the section of code immediately after the one you've just edited, remove the extra code to leave just what is highlighted above – ' ' . $review . '...
. This will prevent the review text itself from being linked, as it's in the original infobox design.

11 CHECK NEW REVIEW BOX DESIGN

With those code changes made, save the file and load up your shop in a browser. If you don't see what you expected, go back and check the code. If you get completely lost, track down the original reviews.php from the osCommerce files on your hard disk and start afresh.

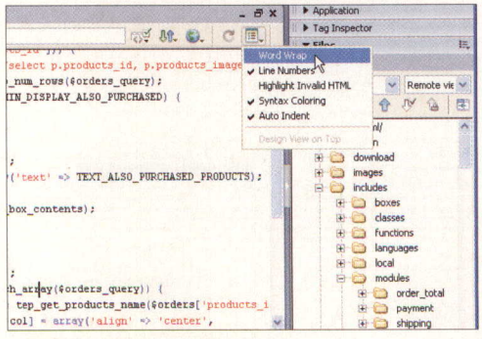


13 ALSO PURCHASED MINIMUM

Let's move on to another integral osCommerce feature, the Also Purchased box. This shows products of potential interest to the customer, based on other people's buying habits. Here you can set the minimum number of items required to make the Also Purchased box appear.

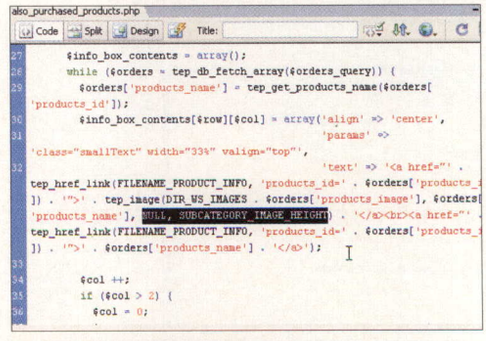
14 BUY THINGS, BOX APPEARS

If you're still running your site offline, even with a low minimum for Also Purchased, it may still not appear if you haven't placed many test orders. To make the box visible, go shopping! Place a few different orders for multiple items to give the system a little information to work with.



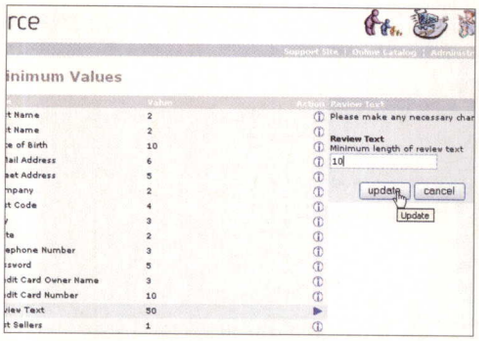
16 OPENING THE MODULE

In Dreamweaver, open the file includes/modules/also_purchased_products.php and activate the Word Wrap feature as shown above. Rather than remove the images from the box, which is admittedly a strange thing to do on a site all about images, we're going to reduce their size.



17 EDITING THE IMAGE SIZE

At the moment, the Also Purchased box shows images at the same size as the main product on the page. To change this, go to line 32 and alter 'SMALL_IMAGE_HEIGHT, SMALL_IMAGE_WIDTH' to 'NULL, SUBCATEGORY_IMAGE_HEIGHT'.

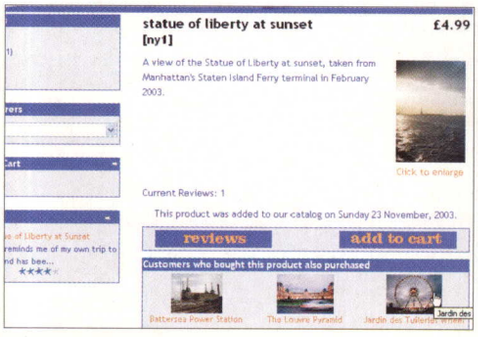


12 ALTER MINIMUM REVIEW LENGTH

The standard setting for the minimum length of a review is 50 characters. You may want to reduce this, in case users want to enter very short reviews of products. In the Admin control panel, click on Configuration, then Minimum Values, and edit the Review Text setting as shown.

15 THE ALSO PURCHASED BOX

So here is the elusive box, which will now appear beneath the main information section of each product page. As with the Reviews box earlier, it does take up rather a large chunk of display space, arguably pulling focus from the main product on the page, so let's make a few changes.


statue of liberty at sunset
[ny1]
£4.99
A view of the Statue of Liberty at sunset, taken from Manhattan's Staten Island Ferry terminal in February 2003.
Click to enlarge
Current Reviews: 1
This product was added to our catalog on Sunday 23 November, 2003.
reviews
add to cart
Customers who bought this product also purchased

18 CHECKING OUT THE RESULTS

Once you've made that change to the code, save the file and open a product page in your Web browser. The Also Purchased box images should now have shrunk to the size of the subcategory image size specified in the Admin control panel.

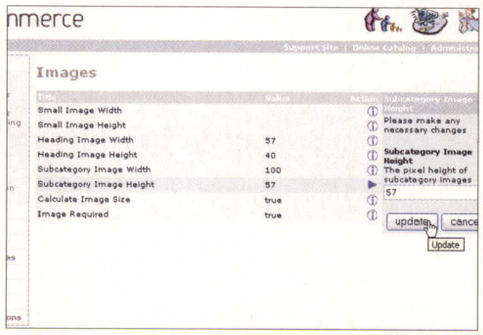
IN DETAIL: CUSTOMISING SITE IMAGES

osCommerce comes with a variety of built-in images to help get your site off the ground. Here's a rundown

Back in earlier issues of the series, we explained how to set up your own basic osCommerce template to create a custom look for your shopping site. At that time we didn't quite get around to mentioning the various graphics which feature on particular pages of the standard osCommerce site, which you might want to replace or remove in the interests of making the site design cohesive and have a feeling of being unique rather than off-the-shelf.

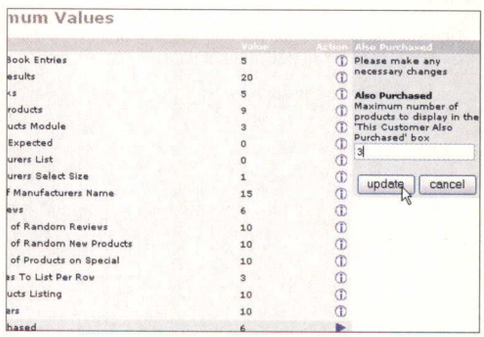
In the table shown here, we've summarised the filenames and descriptions of many such graphics, to aid you with designing replacements for them. Should you wish to remove the graphics from use entirely, that is best done by accessing the templates for the pages which they are used on, and deleting the relevant image tags. Don't just delete the offending image files themselves without editing the code, because you'll end up with an even worse situation of endless missing image symbols across your site. If you want to replace the graphics but don't have anything to use as a substitute, try searching at sites like **www.321clipart.com** or **www.aaaclipart.com** for free alternatives. ■

FILE NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
images/arrow_south_east.gif	White arrow pointing down and right	Various locations
images/arrow_east_south.gif	White arrow pointing right and down	Various locations
images/arrow_down.gif	Arrow pointing down	Various locations
images/table_background_default.gif	Person at cashdesk	Top right of many pages, alongside headline
images/table_background_payment.gif	Credit cards	Checkout page
images/table_background_confirmation.gif	Receipt emerging from machine	Order confirmation page
images/table_background_man_on_board.gif	Suited man on surfboard (huge)	Final order confirmation page
images/checkout_bullet.gif	Orange bullet point	Marks stages of order process
images/infobox/arrow_right.gif	White arrow pointing right	Top right corner of infoboxes, always linked to other page
includes/languages/english/images/icon.gif	Union Jack flag	Languages infobox (NB: also change other flags)
includes/languages/english/images/buttons/button_tell_a_friend.gif	Yellow envelope	Tell A Friend infobox (NB: also change other language versions)
includes/languages/english/images/buttons/button_quick_find.gif	Cartoon-style magnifying glass	Quick Search infobox (NB: also change other language versions)
images/stars_1.gif to images/stars_5.gif	5 images with varying quantity of stars	Various review-related locations
images/table_background_reviews_new.gif	People on a book	Top right corner of review-related pages
images/table_background_browse.gif	Wooden cartoon signpost	Top right corner of search-related pages
images/table_background_cart.gif	Shopping bags	Top right corner of shopping cart pages
images/table_background_login.gif	Man walking into window	Top right corner of login pages
images/table_background_account.gif	Pen writing in book	Top right corner of account page
images/account_personal.gif	Manilla folder	My Account page
images/account_orders.gif	Boxes with clipboard	My Account page
images/account_notifications.gif	Cartoon envelope	My Account page



19 SET THE SUBCATEGORY IMAGE SIZE

If you're not happy with the size of the Also Purchased images, you can alter it using the Admin control panel for osCommerce. Go to the Configuration section, then the Images panel. Because of the way we've set it up, you only need to edit the subcategory image height.



20 MAXIMUM ALSO PURCHASED ITEMS

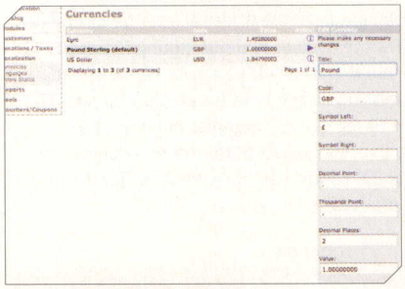
While we're in the Admin control panel, pay a visit to the Maximum Values panel, to set the limit on how many items should be shown in the Also Purchased box. Based on the PhotoGo site design, it makes sense for this to be limited to three, but your site may differ.

TUTORIAL: eCOMMERCE
TURN YOUR STORE INTO AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

TECHNIQUE

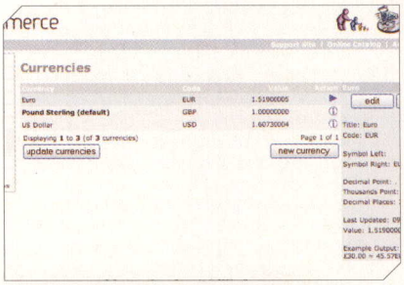
CHECKING UP ON CURRENCIES

A standard part of osCommerce is the ability to hop between different currencies at the flick of a drop-down menu. We haven't paid much attention to this aspect of the software in the past, so here's a quick summary of what you can do with currencies. This is worth a visit even if it's just to stop people buying products based on outdated exchange rates in other currencies.



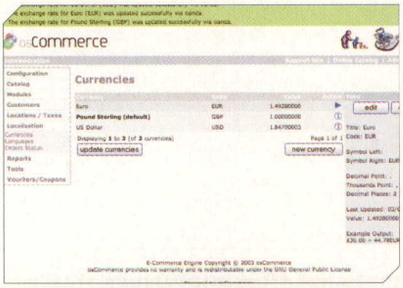
1 CHANGING POUNDS

You can access the currency section of the control panel by clicking on Localization. In the screenshot here we're changing the name of the pound currency from Pounds Sterling to just Pounds.



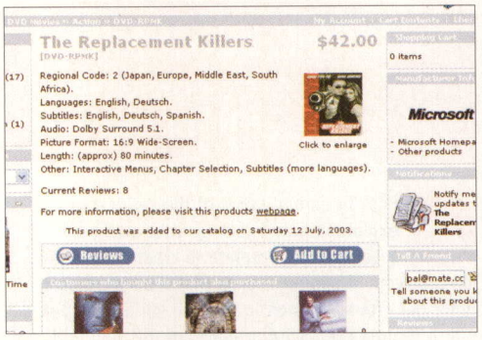
2 CHECKING ACTIVE CURRENCIES

You can view active currencies and make changes to them, or delete them, from this section of the Admin control panel. Here we discover that the exchange rates are rather out of date...



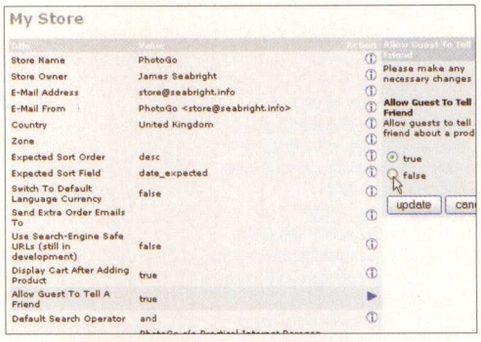
3 AUTO-UPDATING EXCHANGE RATES

Clicking the Update button at the bottom of this Currencies page of the Admin control panel will establish a connection with an external site to automatically update conversion rates.



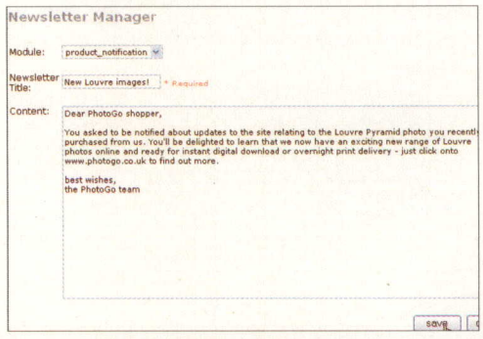
21 LET VISITORS TELL THEIR FRIENDS

Another joy-spreading feature of osCommerce is the Tell A Friend function, as shown here at the osCommerce demo shop. Again, this is currently missing from the PhotoGo layout because it was not included in the design when we installed the Simple Template System.



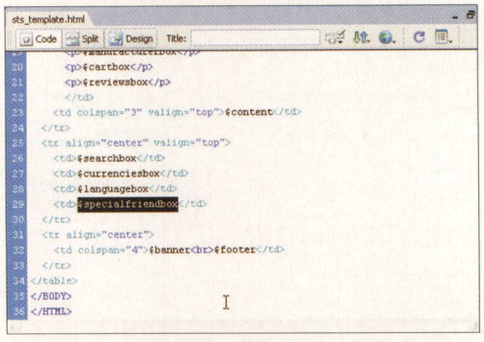
25 CHANGING GUEST ACCESS

If you would like to provide access to the Tell A Friend function to people who aren't registered site members or haven't logged in, you can do this by going to the Configuration section of the Admin control panel and changing the option as shown above.


Newsletter Manager
Module:
product_notification
Newsletter Title:
New Louvre images!
* Required
Content:
Dear PhotoGo shopper,
You asked to be notified about updates to the site relating to the Louvre Pyramid photo you recentl
purchased from us. You'll be delighted to learn that we now have an exciting new range of Louvre
photos online and ready for instant digital download or overnight print delivery - just click onto
www.photogo.co.uk to find out more.
best wishes,
the PhotoGo team
save

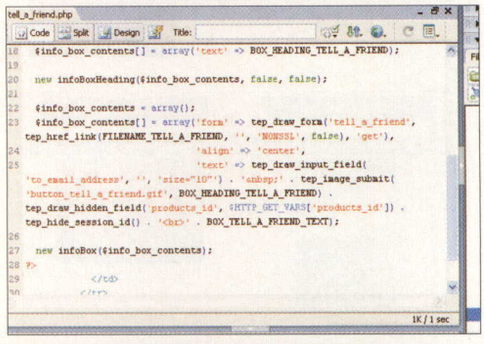
29 TYPING THE UPDATE CONTENTS

Select Product_Notification from the Module pop-up menu to specify the kind of message you want to send out. Whatever you enter in Newsletter Title will be the email subject line. In the Content section, remember to explain why this message is being sent. Click Save to move on.



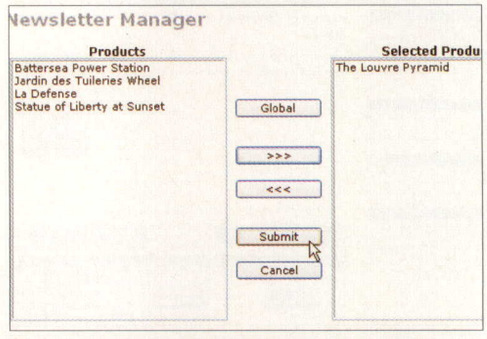
22 ADDING THE TELL A FRIEND INFOBOX

In Dreamweaver, open includes/sts_template.html and find a suitable place to add $specialfriendbox to the code. We've done some table redesign work, increasing the colspan of the main section (as highlighted) to allow for the extra column created by adding the infobox.



26 EDITING THE TELL A FRIEND BOX

There isn't much to the Tell A Friend infobox, but if you would like to edit its contents anyway, you can do that by using Dreamweaver to open the file includes/boxes/tell_a_friend.php. The line of text in the box can be edited at includes/languages/english/tell_a_friend.php.

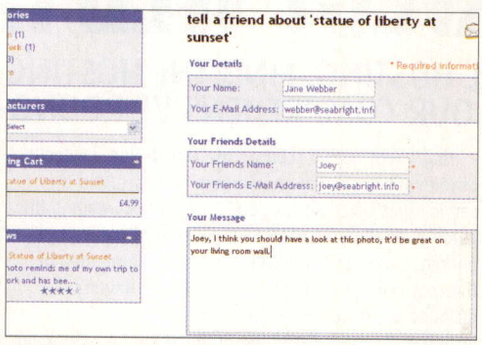


30 LOCKING AND SENDING THE UPDATE

Click the Lock and the Send buttons. When you reach the screen shown here, click the name of the product to which the update relates, and click the right arrow button to select it, then Submit. Alternatively, just click Global to send the message to all notification subscribers.

23 USING THE TELL A FRIEND FUNCTION

If you go to a product page now, you'll be able to see the Tell A Friend function in action. Enter an email address into the box to test it out, and click the Envelope icon. If you're not logged in as a customer at the moment, you may need to do so before you can send the message.



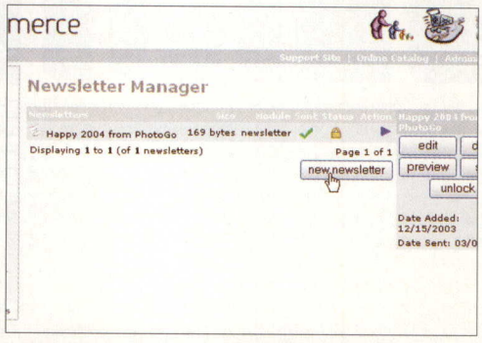
24 GET THE MESSAGE

The default setting on osCommerce is that only registered users can send messages to friends informing them about products, which means that the site can automatically place your name and email address as the sender, leaving you to just fill in the recipient details and message.

photogo
Checkout
your order has been processed!
Your order has been successfully processed! Your products will arrive at their destination within 2-5 working days.
Please notify me of updates to the products I have selected below:
La Defense
Statue of Liberty at Sunset
Thanks for shopping with us online!

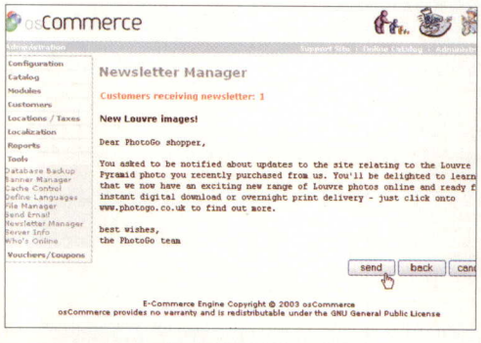
27 PRODUCT UPDATE NOTIFICATIONS

When a purchase is made via the site, the buyer is given the chance to opt into Product Update Notifications, as shown above. This allows you to build up a database of customers who are interested in hearing about changes to particular products and related news of interest.



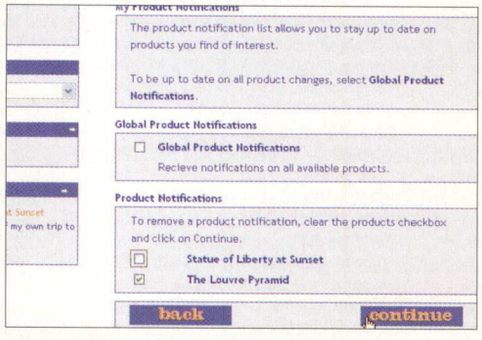
28 SENDING OUT PRODUCT UPDATES

Update Notification emails are managed through the same Admin control panel interface as the newsletters we covered in a previous instalment – in the Tools section, click on Newsletter Manager. To set up a Product Update Notification email, click New Newsletter.


osCommerce
Configuration
Catalog
Modules
Customers
Locations / Taxes
Localization
Reports
Tools
Vouchers/Coupons
Newsletter Manager
Customers receiving newsletter: 1
New Louvre images!
Dear PhotoGo shopper,
You asked to be notified about updates to the site relating to the Louvre Pyramid photo you recently purchased from us. You'll be delighted to learn that we now have an exciting new range of Louvre photos online and ready f instant digital download or overnight print delivery - just click onto www.photogo.co.uk to find out more.
best wishes,
the PhotoGo team
send
back
E-Commerce Engine Copyright © 2003 osCommerce
osCommerce provides no warranty and is redistributable under the GNU General Public License

31 CONFIRM MESSAGE SENDING

You'll now be told how many customers will be sent the update email, and shown a copy of it as it will be sent out. If it's correct, click Send to confirm. You may also want to include in your updates that customers can alter their notification options at the account_notifications.php page.


The product notification list allows you to stay up to date on products you find of interest.
To be up to date on all product changes, select Global Product Notifications.
Global Product Notifications
Global Product Notifications
Recieve notifications on all available products.
Product Notifications
To remove a product notification, clear the products checkbox and click on Continue.
Statue of Liberty at Sunset
The Louvre Pyramid
back
continue

32 NOTIFICATION OPTIONS

Here's an example of the Notification Options page for a sample customer. We will return in a future issue to the question of how this and other account information pages can be linked to from the site itself, rather than just providing links in order and update emails.

EXPERT ADVICE

PRODUCT UPDATE INFOBOX

Eagle-eyed readers may notice that we haven't mentioned the Product Notification infobox in the steps here. One does indeed exist, but owing to a glitch in the Simple Template System we're using, it isn't possible to display it via our template. In any case, for the site in question the design of the page is already quite box-heavy, so another one wouldn't necessarily have been a good idea. By restricting the Product Notification sign-up process to those customers who've bought the products, you'll be getting a more select and useful group of people with a real interest in new and updated products. That said, we'll keep an eye out for updates to the Simple Template System software, and should the glitch be resolved in a new version of the package, we'll let you know. You can check for yourself at **www.oscommerce.com/community/contributions,1524**.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

After all this talk of customer relations and marketing, next issue will see us return to the more nuts-and-bolts matter of order processing and handling payments, together with a couple of other bonus items for the sake of variety. So while you wait for the next issue to appear, think about how you'll integrate your existing business systems with the osCommerce order and payment system, to help with the smooth coordination of your site and offline order system when you go live. A number of banks and credit card processing centres now offer software to help you link together various business systems to avoid manual re-entry of data, so it's worth looking into these possibilities. They could save you many hours a week on a busy site – which of course yours will soon become!

Sponsored by;
HOSTWAY
THE HOSTING COMPANY
0808 180 1880
www.hostway-uk.com

PICK THE PERFECT WEB HOSTING DEAL

FROM ECOMMERCE TO PERSONAL HOSTING, FIND THE HOSTING SERVICE THAT'S PERFECT FOR YOUR NEEDS WITH OUR COMPREHENSIVE ROUND-UP OF DEALS

Picking a Web host is a decision often left to the end of the Web creation process. Let's face it, we've all been guilty of concentrating so much on the design of the site that we've ignored the importance of signing up for a good hosting deal. Hosting is of the utmost importance, though – after all, this is where your site will be housed, so it's imperative that you find a service that not only provides you with the services you need, but also with good reliability.

That's why we've scoured the Net to find a selection of relevant deals that should help you ascertain the service that's perfect for you. The aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face. While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms included, we have listed the products that we think are most relevant to our readers.

Our listings contain the categories that we think will be most relevant to you. With this in mind, we hope that we can help you pick the hosting deal that will suit you best – don't just jump in and sign up on the basis of the figures you see on these pages, though. We recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further.

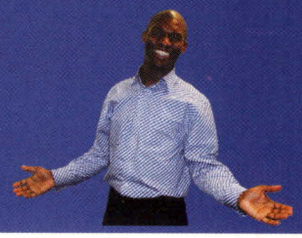
KEEPING UP TO DATE

While we try and ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details, drop an email to **webdesigner@paragon.co.uk** with the information you would like changed.

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Starters	08708 503 305	£26.06	25MB		20	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Home (Linux)	08708 503 305	£70.36	500MB	3Gb	100	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Home (MS)	08708 503 305	£84.46	500MB	3Gb	100	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Business (Linux)	08708 503 305	£126.76	1GB	10Gb	300	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Business (MS)	08708 503 305	£140.86	1GB	10Gb	300	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Professional (Linux)	08708 503 305	£239.56	2GB	40Gb	1000	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Professional (MS)	08708 503 305	£281.86	2GB	40Gb	1000	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
123 reg www.123-reg.co.uk	Regular	0900 11 22 123	45.87	250Mb	10	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
123 reg www.123-reg.co.uk	Xtra	0900 11 22 123	269.87	500Mb	25	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
123-reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	123-reg xtra	0900 2211123	£59.88	500Mb	2Gb	25	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Everyday	0845 166 7456	£100	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	PHP	0845 166 7456	£150	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	JAVA Tomcat	0845 166 7456	£175	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Coldfusion	0845 166 7456	£250	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49pence (www.49pence.com)	Standard	0870 141 7149	24.99	50mb	500mb	1	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49pence (www.49pence.com)	Advanced	0870 141 7149	£49.99	200mb	1000mb	10	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49pence (www.49pence.com)	Enterprise	0870 141 7149	£74.99	500	2500	20	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49pence (www.49pence.com)	Enterprise Pro	0870 141 7149	£124.99	1Gb	5Gb	Unlimited	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49pence (www.49pence.com)	Ultra	0870 141 7149	£249.99	2.5Gb	1.5Gb	Unlimited	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Bronze Package	0845 166 8386	£40.00	10Mb	500Mb	2	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Gold Package	0845 166 8386	£79.99	50Mb	2Gb	50	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Titanium Package	0845 166 8386	£149.99	500Mb	5Gb	500	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Reseller Package	0845 166 8386	£299.99	1Gb	10Gb	1000	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9NetAvenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Starter	0870 8726560	99	50	1.5Gb	10	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9NetAvenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Professional	0870 8726560	199	100	2.5Gb	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9NetAvenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Corporate	0870 8726560	399	500	5Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Economy	0871 277 9827	£120	1Gb	50Gb	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Cheapnet (www.cheapnet.co.uk)	ISP For Small Businesses	0870 516 8160	£96	Unlimited	10Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechnology.co.uk)	Base Package	0870 742 0530	£94	25Mb	1Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Lite	0845 355 1000	29.99	10	1Gb	10	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	699	500	30Gb	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Entry Package	0870 703 1000	£120	100Mb	1.5Gb	5	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DataGate (www.datagate.co.uk)	Exchange Hosting	08000 19 98 19	From £204	100Mb	Unlimited	0	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DataGate (www.datagate.co.uk)	Unix Shared Business Hosting	08000 19 98 19	£249	200Mb	6Gb	100	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level1	0800 652 2110	185	50	1gb	10	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level2	0800 652 2110	259	100	2gb	25	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level3	0800 652 2110	330	200	3Gb	50	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level4	0800 652 2110	369	300	4Gb	80	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level5	0800 652 2110	409	400	5Gb	120	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level6	0800 652 2110	549	600	6Gb	200	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dedicated Servers (www.dedicated-servers.co.uk)	Linux entry	0870 333 0365	99/month	40gb	30Gb	variable	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dedicated Servers (www.dedicated-servers.co.uk)	Windows entry	0870 333 0365	199/month	40gb	30Gb	variable	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Reseller Unix	0870 7414151	£470	Unlimited	20Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗

- Domain Names
- Virtual Web Hosting
- Dedicated Solutions
- Custom Enterprise Servers

- Advanced Control Panel
- Windows or Linux platforms
- 30 Day Money Back Guarantee
- Award winning Support



NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Reseller Windows	0870 7414151	£587.50	Unlimited	20Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Enterprise Plan	0870 7414151	£105.75	100Mb	2Gb	20	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£211.50	250Mb	5Gb	50	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Designer Plan	0870 7414151	£141	100Mb	2Gb	20	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Developer Plan	0870 741415	£305.50	250Mb	5Gb	50	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Windows Shared	n/a	44.99	100	2Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Starter	n/a	19.99	50	1Gb	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Standard	n/a	44.99	100	2Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Premier	n/a	79.99	200	3Gb	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Basic Plan	070 2097 1262	£131.40	50Mb	1.5Gb	5	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Standard Plan	070 2097 1262	£191.40	100Mb	3Gb	40	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Advanced Plan	070 2097 1262	£251.40	150Mb	5Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Professional Plan	070 2097 1262	£311.40	300Mb	6Gb	200	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
eHosting (www.ehosting.co.uk)	Home & Business 200 Account	0161 236 2241	£49.99	200Mb	10Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Kick Start Linux	0871 717 0390	49	50	3Gb	20	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Kick Start Windows	0871 717 0390	75	50	3Gb	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Standard Linux	0871 717 0390	99	100	3Gb	100	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Windows	0871 717 0390	125	100	3Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Enterprise Linux	0871 717 0390	199	250	5Gb	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Enterprise Windows	0871 717 0390	225	250	5Gb	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Pro Linux	0871 717 0390	399	500	10Gb	500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business	0870 888 3600	149.99	2Gb	n/a	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business Pro	0870 888 3600	249.99	5Gb	n/a	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Net Pro	0870 888 3600	299.99	3Gb	n/a	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Net Standard	0870 888 3600	199.99	2Gb	n/a	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Starter	0870 888 3600	19.99	100	n/a	15	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Home	0870 888 3600	49.99	500	n/a	100	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Home Pro	0870 888 3600	69.99	1Gb	n/a	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GB Reg (www.gbreg.co.uk)	Starter (Linux)	0870 1620712	£19.99	50mb	500mb	5	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GB Reg (www.gbreg.co.uk)	Standard (Linux)	0870 1620712	£49.99	100mb	1gb	10	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GB Reg (www.gbreg.co.uk)	Silver (Linux)	0870 1620712	£99.99	250mb	2gb	15	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GB Reg (www.gbreg.co.uk)	Gold (Linux)	0870 1620712	£149.99	500mb	3gb	20	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Giacom (www.giacom.net)	Business Pro	0800 542 7500	199	100	2Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hostextra (www.hostextra.co.uk)	Pro-Host	08702 501 500	99.45	100	10Gb	200		✓				✓	✓	✓	
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	Unix launcher	0870 004 4444	78	50	5gb	5	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	NT launcher		180	50	5gb	5	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Haisoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft Perso	0870 080 4247	£14.90	100Mb	1Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft Pro	0870 080 4247	£49.90	500Mb	10Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft eCommerce	0870 080 4247	£99.90	750Mb	20Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Windows 2000 Unlimited Plan	0208 777 8881	£99.50	Unlimited	Unmetered	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)		0208 777 8881	£99.50	1Gb	5Gb	1000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hostway (www.hostway-uk.com)	Silver	0808 180 1880	£89.95	100Mb	1Gb	5	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Hostway (www.hostway-uk.com)	Gold	0808 180 1880	£134.55	200Mb	4Gb	10	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hostway (www.hostway-uk.com)	Gold Plus	0808 180 1880	£179.55	200Mb	6Gb	30	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hostway (www.hostway-uk.com)	Platinum	0808 180 1880	£449.55	500Mb	10Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hostway (www.hostway-uk.com)	Platinum Plus	0808 180 1880	£809.95	500Mb	15Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hostway (www.hostway-uk.com)	Email Plus	0808 180 1880	£49.95	50Mb	n/a	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Lite	08712 773494	14.99	25	1Gb	5	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Starter	08712 773494	23.49	50	1Gb	20	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Standard	08712 773494	52.49	100	1Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Professional	08712 773494	68.99	250	1Gb	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Business	08712 773494	119.99	500	1Gb	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Corporate	08712 773494	199.99	1000	1Gb	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interdirect Limited (www.interdirect.co.uk)	Business Starter	0845 121 5566	150	25Mb	5Gb	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	n/a	n/a
Interdirect Limited (www.interdirect.co.uk)	Business Intermediate	0845 121 5566	350	100Mb	10Gb	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	n/a	n/a
Interdirect Limited (www.interdirect.co.uk)	Business Advanced	0845 121 5566	450	250Mb	20Gb	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	n/a	n/a
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Basic 50	0870 160 5555	70	50	1Gb	5	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Frontpage 50	0870 160 5555	100	50	1Gb	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Standard 200	0870 160 5555	160	200	2Gb	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Superior 500	0870 160 5555	220	500	3Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 50	0870 160 5555	100	50	1Gb	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 200	0870 160 5555	190	200	2Gb	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 500	0870 160 5555	260	500	3Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inweb (www.inweb.co.uk)	Example1	0800 612222	200	50	2.5Gb	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Entry	0115 917 0000	99.95	600Mb	1	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Pro	0115 917 0000	199.95	1000Mb	1000	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business	0115 917 0000	199	1000Mb	1000	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business e-commerce	0115 917 0000	499	1000Mb	1000	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Reseller	0115 917 0000	500	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	

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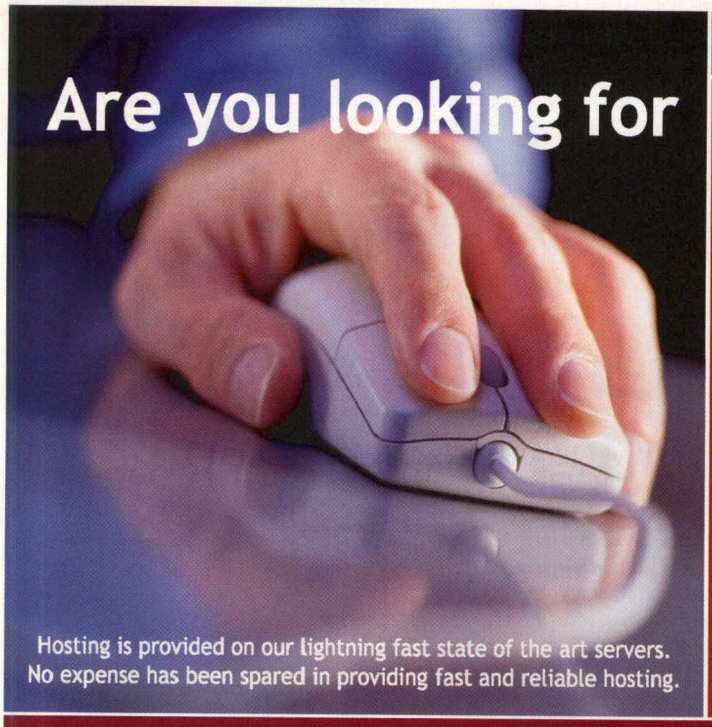
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Home User Package	0870 9059 444	£35.25	50Mb	500Mb	5	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Advanced User Package	0870 9059 444	£58.75	100Mb	750Mb	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Small Business Package	0870 9059 444	£82.25	175Mb	1Gb	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Large Business Package	0870 9059 444	£105.75	300Mb	1.2Gb	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Premium Business Package	0870 9059 444	£176.25	500Mb	1.5Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	StartUp	0870 120 8888	£49.99	50Mb	1Gb	5	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Business	0870 120 8888	£149.99	250Mb	4Gb	25	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Enterprise+	0870 120 8888	£289.99	750Mb	15Gb	200	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!Benefit (www.netbenefit.com)	Business Package	0870 264 2298	£199	100Mb	2Gb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!cetera (www.inetc.net)	HOME	0800 2987 214	£60	200Mb	1Gb	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!cetera (www.inetc.net)	COMMERCE	0800 2987 214	£180	200Mb	2Gb	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!cetera (www.inetc.net)	RESELLER	0800 2987 214	£450	2Gb	20Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!cetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 2000	0800 2987 214	£2000	80Gb	12Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!cetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 2400	0800 2987 214	£3000	2x80Gb	24Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!cetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 3000	0800 2987 214	£4000	2x73Gb SCSI	30Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ne!cetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 1800	0800 2987 214	£780	40Gb	40Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Unix	0800 072 0000	324	100	5Gb	1	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Windows	0800 072 0000	324	100	5Gb	1	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Standard Hosting	01329 226722	50	0	0	1	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Business Bronze Unix	01329 226722	100	250	250Mb	1	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Business Gold Unix	01329 226722	149	1Gb	1Gb	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Business Gold Windows	01329 226722	149	1Gb	1Gb	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Pay As You Host (www.pay-as-you-host.com)	Standard	0870 284 0287	£47.88	50Mb	512Mb	Unlimited	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Z account	0800 316 1006	£293.75	120Mb	10Gb	Unlimited	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Dolphin	0800 316 1006	£2172.58	2x20Gb	40-60Gb	Unlimited	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Fully managed servers	0800 316 1006	°£5287.50	2x70Gb SCSI	80-250Gb	Unlimited	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Basic	01684 893020	47.88	10Mb	1Gb	1	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Soho	01684 893020	71.88	250Mb	3Gb	10	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Enterprise	01684 893020	107.88	500Mb	10Gb	50	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Corporate	01684 893020	203.88	1Gb	20Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Designer	01684 893020	239.88	1Gb	20Gb	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Reseller	01684 893020	479.88	unlimited	30Gb	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 1	0800 321 7788	49	10Mb	2Gb	1	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 2	0800 321 7788	69	20Mb	2Gb	1	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 1	0800 321 7788	99	25Mb	2Gb	1	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 2	0800 321 7788	149	50Mb	2Gb	1	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SO Hosts (www.sohosts.com)	Standard	0845 644 1080	£29.99	500Mb	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stonehenge Internet Services (www.stonehengeinternet.co.uk)	Prestige(Windows)	0870 1620712	From £49.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stonehenge Internet Services (www.stonehengeinternet.co.uk)	Prestige(Linux)	0870 1620712	From £49.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swift Internet (www.swiftinter.net)	S15 Linux	0845 60 60 210	£44	75Mb	1Gb	1	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swift Internet (www.swiftinter.net)	S25 Linux	0845 60 60 210	£70	125Mb	2Gb	5	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swift Internet (www.swiftinter.net)	S50 Linux or Windows	0845 60 60 210	£94	250Mb	3Gb	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swift Internet (www.swiftinter.net)	S125 Linux or Windows	0845 60 60 210	£170	750Mb	7Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Parking	08707 65 63 64	£52.88	25Mb	500Mb	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Forwarding	08707 65 63 64	From £15	n/a	500Mb	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Hosting	08707 65 63 64	From £7.50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win50	0845 125 9500	£58.75	50Mb	500Mb	5	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win100	0845 125 9500	£117.50	100Mb	1Gb	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win200	0845 125 9500	£235	200Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ValueWebHosts (www.valuewebhosts.com)	Plan 1	n/a	£8.99	Unlimited	125Mb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Entry	0870 333 0250	£79.50	600Mb	7Gb	300	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Home	0870 333 025	0£99.95	1.5Gb	10Gb	500	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Soho	0870 333 0250	£149.99	3Gb	15Gb	1000	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Professional	0870 333 0250	£199.95	5Gb	20Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	eCommerce	0870 333 0250	£499	5Gb	20Gb	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard	0870 050 0080	39.95	50Mb	1Gb	5	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard Plus	0870 050 0080	99.95	50Mb	2Gb	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business	0870 050 0080	79.95	100Mb	3Gb	15	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business Plus	0870 050 0080	159.95	150Mb	4Gb	30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional	0870 050 0080	179.95	250Mb	7Gb	50	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional Plus	0870 050 0080	299	500Mb	10Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb	0870 050 0080	64.95	75Mb	1.5Gb	10	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	149.95	100Mb	2.5Gb	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb	0870 050 0080	149.95	200Mb	4Gb	25	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	299	250Mb	5Gb	40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb	0870 050 0080	249	500Mb	7.5Gb	100	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	499	500Mb	10Gb	150	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zen Internet (www.zen.co.uk)	ActiveSpace	0845 058 9000	£100	50MB	2GB	0	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Zen Internet (www.zen.co.uk)	.NETspace	0845 058 9000	£250	100MB	4GB	0	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗



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WHO'S ON CALL?

MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark lectures on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, where he teaches digital imaging, interface design and 3D applications. Mark is our resident Flash expert, and this issue he helps out with some sound niggles, and also makes the issue of transparency, er, transparent. He also explains away how you can import cut-outs from Photoshop to Flash.

NEIL WITHNALL

Neil is a freelance Web developer who has spent years learning the technical and practical aspects of Web design. He is equally at home working in Dreamweaver as he is with the latest hand-coding technologies. That's just as well, as we've drafted him in to be your friendly Dreamweaver expert, so if you have any HTML issues, Neil will sort you out.

GEORGE CAIANS

George is a freelance illustrator who specialises in Photoshop, After Effects and 3D modelling. We've procured George's formidable talents as our regular Photoshop expert, so if you have a problem with your pixels, call upon George. This issue he shows you how to create a scary Dalek animation, and also gives you the skinny on how you can turn winter into summer.

RACHEL ANDREW

Rachel is a director of Web development company edgeofmyseat.com (**www.edgeofmyseat.com**), and is currently a member of the Web Standards Project (**www.webstandards.org**). With years of Webmaster experience, she was the perfect choice to be our Web development expert, so any time you have a coding glitch, drop Rachel a line and she'll sort you out.

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FLASH

HAVING PROBLEMS WITH VECTOR-BASED ANIMATION? ALLOW MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM TO CURE YOUR HEADACHES WITH A SMILE

TOGGLE CONTROL

Q I am building a Web site that uses Flash in a frame at the top of the page to control sound. The reason I've done this is so that whatever page is loaded in the frame below, the sound will keep playing. That's the background, here's my question: I'd really like to be able to have a toggle button to click between the sound playing and being muted. I've tried without success – is this possible?

Sagar Patel

A Yes, this is a possibility. All you have to do is use a variable to control the sound, so we'll use a 'boolean' variable which can only equal true or false. If it's true, the sound is playing and we'll mute it; but if the variable is false, it isn't playing and we'll start the playing process. Just in case you're not aware, you will need to right-click on the sound in the library and click Linkage in the pop-up menu. Click the Export For ActionScript option, give it a name and click OK. Once you've made a button, add this code:

```
on (press){
        if(_root.playSound1==false){
                _root.name_of_sound.start(0, 1);
                _root.playSound1=true;
        }
        else if(_root.playSound1==true){

_root.name_of_sound.stop("name_of_linkage");
                _root.playSound1=false;
                }
}
```

As you can see, the If statement checks the condition of the variable playSound1. You'll also need this code on the first frame of your document:

```
name_of_sound=newSound();
name_of_sound.attachSound("name_of_linkage");
name_of_sound.stop("name_of_linkage");
playSound1=false;
```

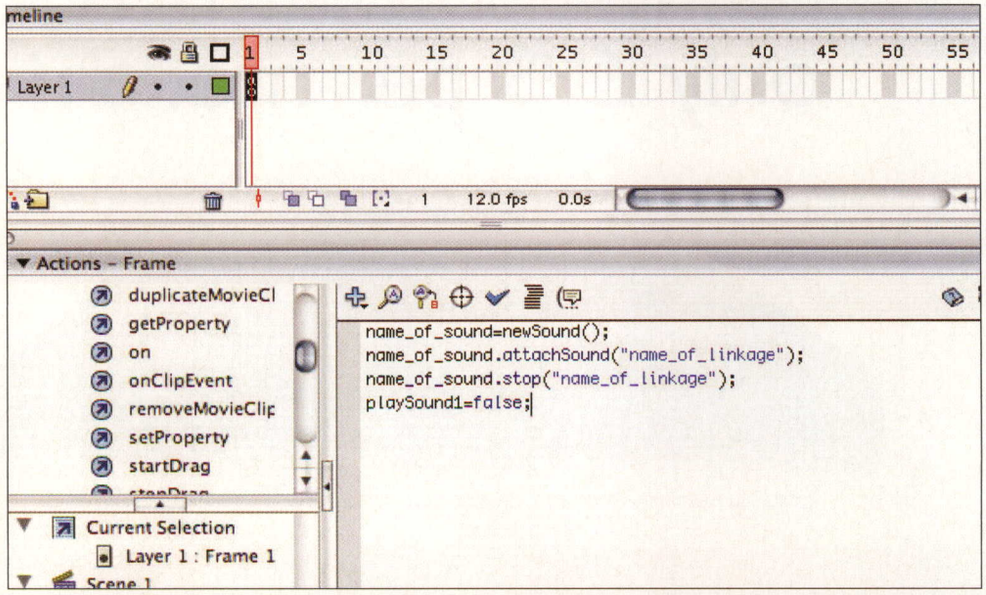
This code sets up the code to recognise the sound based on the linkage name, so you'll have to change the "name_of_linkage" to whatever you named your sound. It also initiates the boolean variable playSound1 to false. That should sort you out!

COLOURFUL CONFUSION

Q I am confused by transparency in Flash. In the Color Mixer there is a setting for alpha, and sometimes on the Properties panel there's a setting for alpha – but sometimes there isn't. How can I tween alpha so that it's animated between two keyframes? If I use the alpha in the Color Mixer it doesn't animate. Please help!

Lisa Evans

A This is a simple problem to solve. Yes, you can add transparency with the alpha settings in the Mixer, and this will allow graphics to be semi-



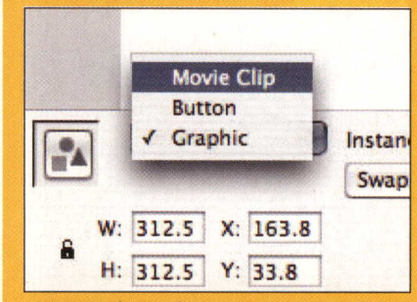
The above code is needed on the first frame of your document. It sets up the code to recognise the sound based on the linkage name

EXPERT ADVICE

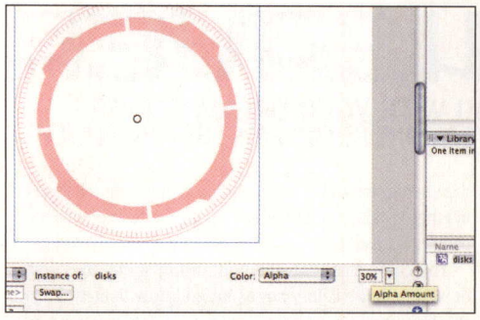
IN THE LIBRARY

CHANGING PROPERTIES

The library contains all the media that you use in your project, but sometimes it's necessary to add code to graphics in the library. Library objects that have Graphic set as the property cannot support having code placed on them. You don't have to recreate the graphic as a movie clip or nest the graphic inside another movie clip – instead just right-click on the graphic in the library and in the menu that pops up choose Properties and change the graphic to Movie Clip. Graphic library objects that are on the stage can be clicked on and changed to Movie Clip in the Properties palette. Code can now be added to these graphics.



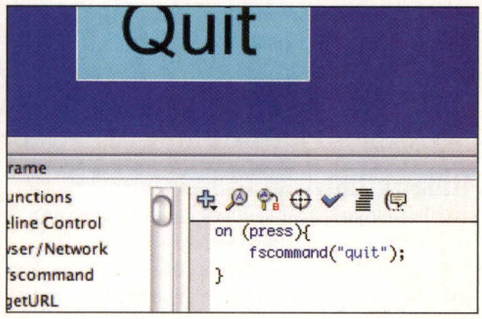
■ You can change the properties quite easily by selecting Movie Clip from the menu



■ Setting the alpha to 0 for your first frame then giving a subsequent frame an alpha of 100 fades the image in nicely

transparent. However, this is not something that can be animated. I take it you're trying to animate a graphic fading in. To do this, you need to draw your graphic then convert it to a symbol so it's in the library. Once done, you can select the graphic on the stage. Because this has now come from the library, you will see on the Properties panel that there's an option for colour: change this to Alpha and a value of 0%. This option is only available to library items.

Now create another keyframe, and with the graphic selected on this keyframe you can take the Alpha value up to 100%. Place a motion tween between the keyframes, and that should sort out the problem.



■ The FS command only works when playing in the standalone Flash player, and is not designed to work in a browser

QUITTING TIME

Q I've been trying to code a Quit button for my Web site in Flash that when clicked will shut the browser. I've been using the FS command, but this doesn't seem to work. Is there a way I can do this?

Ben Tandy

A The FS command can code a Quit button, but is not designed to work in a browser – only in the Flash player, so you can quit from a projector file which runs like a standalone program. If it worked in the browser it would make it shut down, which is what you want, but Macromedia (and I) can see this posing problems. ■

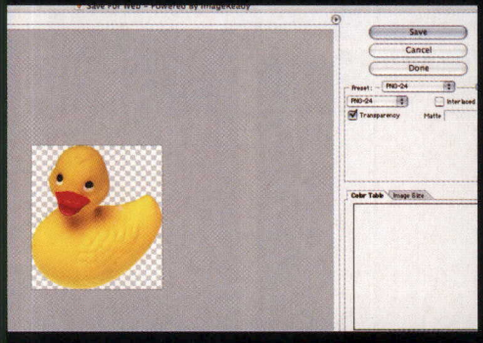
TECHNIQUE

IMPORTING CUT-OUTS

Q I want to bring photographic cut-out shapes from Photoshop into Flash. I'd like to be able to retain transparency, but don't fancy saving the image as a GIF because of the loss in colours. Is there an easy solution or should I place a mask over the top in Flash?

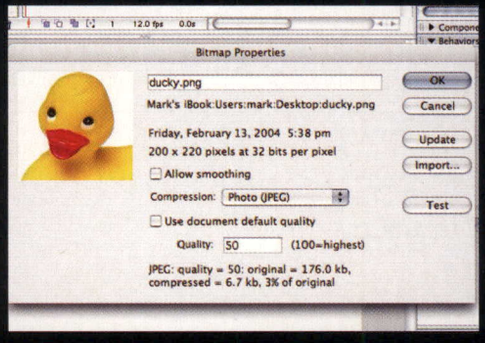
Simon Partington

A Yes this can be done, and there are several ways. The method you suggest is one way – you could import an image without transparency then draw a shape with the Pen tool on the layer above and convert it into a mask, which will stop the outer area being visible. But sometimes there are graphics in Photoshop already cut out that you can just bring across. I prefer the PNG method of saving images, as this retains transparency yet produces large graphics. This can be sorted out when you get into Flash by changing the compression method of the imported graphic in the library. The result should be transparent graphics with a small file size.



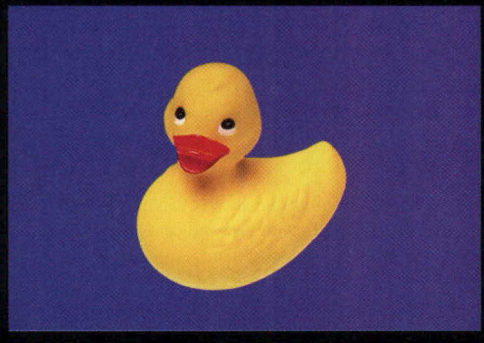
1 SAVE FOR WEB

Once you have cut out your image in Photoshop, go to the File menu and choose Save for Web. In the Preset choose PNG 24 and make sure Transparency is checked. You can now save this image in a suitable location ready for importing into Flash.



2 IMPORT INTO FLASH

From the File menu in Flash choose Import to Library and import the PNG image. Double-click on the graphic in the library and change the compression to Photo (JPEG). You can also change the quality by unchecking the Use Default Document Quality option to get a better file size.



3 EXPORT THE FLASH FILE

Now place the photo over a different colour on the stage and you will see that it's perfectly cut out. Export the Flash movie, and even though JPEG quality compression has been added to the image (JPEG does not support transparency natively), the image will retain its transparency!

DREAMWEAVER

NEIL WITHNALL IS HERE TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR DREAMWEAVER WOES, SO IF YOU HAVE ANY WEB-WEAVING PROBLEMS, GET IN TOUCH

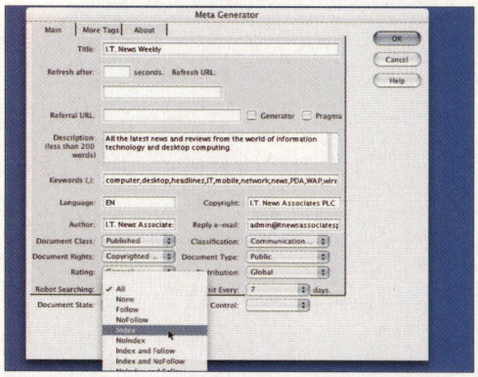
THOSE ELUSIVE META TAG OBJECTS

Q I've recently started using meta tags to try and improve my site listing with search engines, but notice that Dreamweaver MX doesn't seem to offer many meta tag objects. Are there any extensions that might help?

Mike Freeman

A Although Dreamweaver only has two specific meta tag objects available, 'Keywords' and 'Description', you can use the general purpose Meta object to enter other meta tag types. In practice, this means knowing the exact names and formats for every meta tag type, so a better option would be to download the free Meta Generator extension from **www.macromedia.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm?view=sn121&extID=234029**, which provides access to over 40 different meta tag types including those used to send instructions to search engine crawlers.

For more information about the extension itself and descriptions for each tag visit **www.dmedia.net/dreamwarrior/metagenerator.html**.



With a little bit of ingenuity (and the use of an extension), you can access a wealth of additional meta tag options

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Q I'd like to make my sites as accessible as possible to cater for people with low-end computer systems and also support blind and visually impaired users. What tools are available in Dreamweaver to help me do this and where can I find more information about accessibility in general?

Veronica Thorpe

A To start with, take a look at the Check Accessibility and Check Target Browsers options under the File>Check Page menu. The first option generates a comprehensive report documenting how well your site design meets the formalised Web Accessibility Initiative guidelines. The second option validates your page against the implemented HTML standard used in various versions of Internet Explorer, Netscape and Opera to see how well the page is handled.

You could also try to find out, using server logs, what browsers your visitors are using and download a copy to see how well your pages display in those packages. For older Windows and Macintosh systems, try searching for applications such as Mosaic, Cello or the earliest versions of Netscape Navigator. Visually impaired users may also have text-to-speech software or text-to-Braille devices that they use to interpret Web pages, which often run on DOS systems.

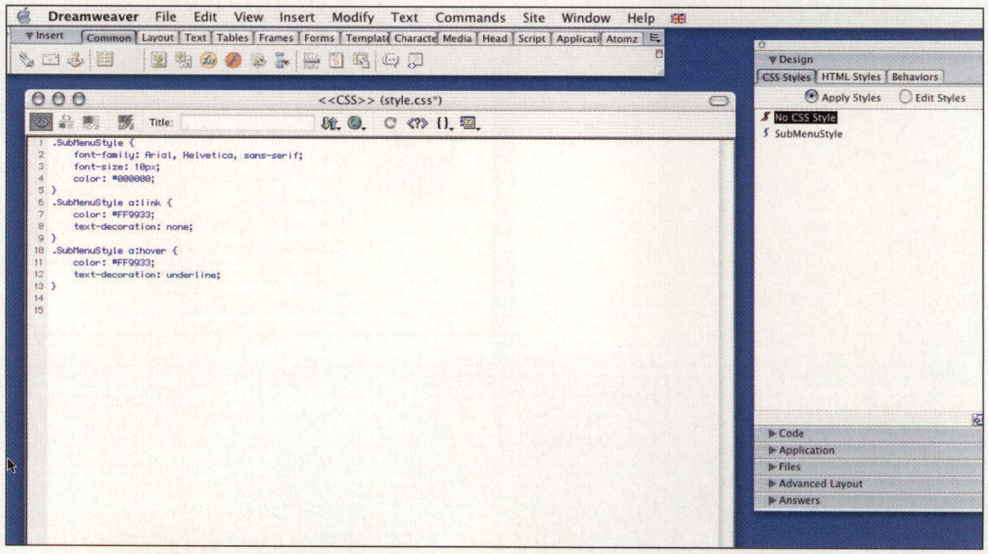
For further advice on accessibility issues, visit the Web Accessibility Initiative at **www.w3.org/WAI/Resources/**, or to learn more about how correctly implemented standards also benefit site accessibility, visit the Web Standards Project at **webstandards.org/learn/**.

LINKING UP

Q I'm having difficulty creating different link styles for each style class I use on my site. I've tried using the CSS Selector option to generate settings for the 'a:link', 'a:visited', 'a:hover' and 'a:active' styles, but these seem to get applied to every class.

Andy Harvey

A It's possible to create link styles simply by adding the link value to the end of the class name. So, for a class called '.myStyle' you can create an additional link style by changing its name to '.myStyle a:link'. However, if you actually try to type this in the New CSS Style dialog box, you'll get an error message telling you that you're not allowed to have spaces in the class name. The quickest way to solve this, if you're using an external style sheet, is to open the file itself in Dreamweaver and type the link option after the class name (but before the opening curly braces). Needless to say, if the style sheet information is embedded in the Web page you're working on, all you need do is switch to Code view and edit the class names from there.

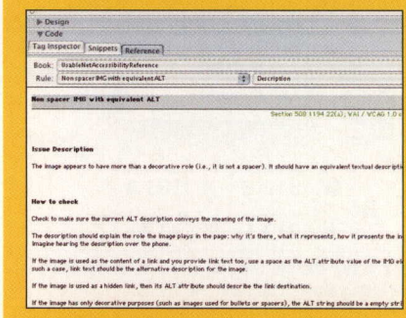


You can apply different CSS styles to links on your site, but you'll have to do things slightly differently to get it to work

EXPERT ADVICE

USABLENET ACCESSIBILITY

For technical advice about accessibility support, don't forget that Dreamweaver MX contains the UsableNet Accessibility Reference, an inbuilt guide which highlights a range of issues that affect a user's ability to access Web sites. These include using images as navigation buttons without providing alternate (ALT) descriptions for text-based browsers, using poorly contrasting colour schemes that affect legibility, etc. These issues will become more and more important in the future as government legislation may effectively make it 'illegal' for Web sites to discriminate against groups of users simply because of specific impairments or the way in which they connect to the Internet.



Make sure your Web site meets accessibility standards with the UsableNet reference guide

PHOTOSHOP

GET YOUR PHOTOSHOP SKILLS UP TO SCRATCH, THANKS TO GEORGE CAIRNS' EXCELLENT ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

SCREEN-PRINT EFFECT

Q How do I adapt a photograph to create a stylised screen-print style background for my Web page?

Carl Manners

A Photoshop has a variety of filters to help create the look you're after. By simplifying the details and colours in a busy photo, you can create attractive background images that won't distract the viewer from any text added to the page. To get that screen-print look, rummage through Photoshop's Artistic Filters – the best one we found for the job was Cut Out. It takes differing textures and colours in the image and simplifies them into clean-cut vector-style blocks of colour. This mimics the screen-print process, where an image is built up using cut-out stencils and multiple layers of paint. In traditional screen-printing, a different shaped stencil is placed on the screen as each layer of colour is applied to the image; these mask parts of the layer from each new coat of paint. When using the Cut Out filter you can exaggerate the screen-print effect by reducing the filter's number of levels and increasing the Edge Simplicity channel.

CREATE WEB-FRIENDLY ANIMATIONS

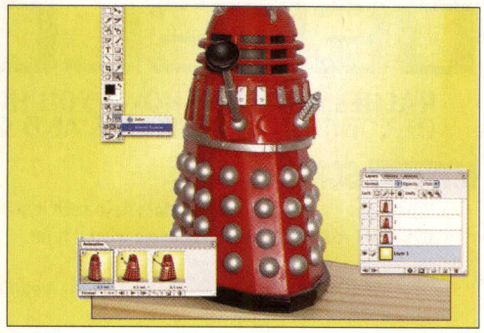
Q I want to create a little animated picture to illustrate my posts to online forums. How do I go about doing that in Photoshop?

Edward Downs

A You'll need to create an animated GIF, but Photoshop and its faithful sidekick ImageReady make animated GIF-building a piece of cake. Start by creating the source components of your animation. You could draw the frames on separate layers in Photoshop. Each moving element in the sequence must be on a separate layer – the static elements of the GIF can be on a background layer. Instead of drawing our GIF components, we shot several stills. If you want to do some Ray Harryhausen-style stop motion animation, use a locked-off tripod. Take a series of stills in different positions. As the camera is locked off, only the moving elements will change from frame to frame, leaving the background static. To keep the GIF size down, shoot only three or four frames.

Once you've created the separate components, layer them in Photoshop – you can use the layers to ensure each one is aligned with its peers. Crop the file to make it square, then save. Click the Jump to ImageReady icon at the bottom of the toolbar. Go to Window>Animation to activate the Animation palette. In the Layers palette hide the unwanted layers so you only see what frame 1 should show. This will appear in the first frame of the Animation palette. Click the Duplicate Frame icon in the Animation palette. In the Layers palette hide the components for frame 1 and show the components for frame 2. This layout appears in frame 2 of the Animation palette.

Repeat the process to add all frame variations. Click Play to test-run. It loops forever by default, but you can adjust this by choosing Other from the Animation palette and editing the loop count. In ImageReady, click the Jump To a Browser icon on the toolbar to see your GIF in action.



This friendly fellow is an animated GIF that was created using Photoshop and ImageReady

TECHNIQUE

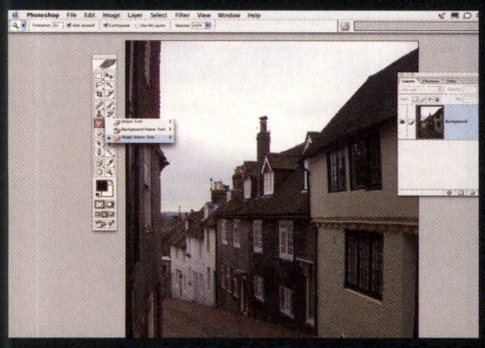
WEATHER MAKEOVER

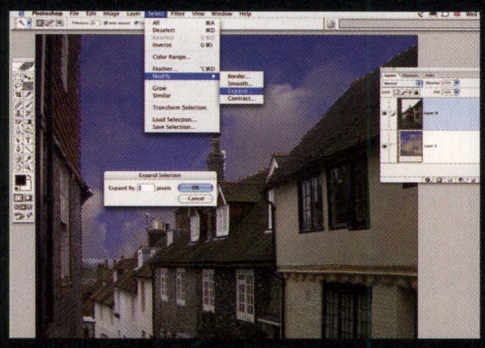
Fast-forward the seasons, thanks to Photoshop's powerful toolset. Summer here we come!

Q **I'm creating a Web site to promote my town online, and really want to present it in a positive light. However, the digital photographs I have were all taken in early February, and the weather was dull and overcast. This means all my images are less than inspiring at the moment. I've tried tweaking things in Photoshop but can't seem to make my changes look believable. How can I make my dull overcast pictures look like they were taken on a bright, sunny day?**

Ron Conway

A Getting hold of a suitably dull yet picturesque shot to practise on was no problem in good old Blighty! In our three-step mini-tutorial below, you'll find a few useful tips and tricks to help you turn even the dullest winter's day into a sparkling summer photograph.





1 IT'S MAGIC

A uniformly grey or white overcast sky doesn't stand a chance in Photoshop. Select the Magic Erase tool (E). Set its Tolerance to 33 and you'll be able to delete that bland sky in a couple of clicks. Drop in a more interesting sky on a previous layer.

2 FAREWELL FRINGE

Sometimes you get a white fringe around the edges of the buildings caused by leftover sky. To erase this telltale sign, select the deleted sky area on the original layer with the Magic Wand. Go to Select>Modify>Expand. Expand the selection by one pixel and hit Backspace to remove the fringe.

3 BRIGHTEN UP

Go to Image>Adjustment and Auto Contrast. This should brighten up the overcast shot by making it look less flat-lit. Warm up the image by going to Image>Adjustments> Hue/Saturation. Increase the Master Saturation to bring out the hidden colours that would be unleashed by real sun.

DEVELOPER

RACHEL ANDREW SHOWS YOU HOW TO TAME EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF CODING TECHNOLOGIES AND CREATE SITES THE WAY YOU WANT

MYSTERY SCRIPT

Q What does <%option explicit%> do? I have seen it at the top of ASP scripts but I'm not sure what it is for.

Raza Awan

A Adding <%option explicit%> to the top of your script means that you have to declare all the variables you are using with Dim. This might seem like unnecessary work, but using option explicit makes your pages much easier to debug. For example:

```
<%
myDate = Date()
response.write mDate
%>
```

This will print out nothing, because I miss-spelled myDate when I wrote it out. If I was using option explicit:

```
<%option explicit%>
<%
Dim myDate
myDate = Date()
response.write mDate
%>
```

I'll get an error telling me that mDate isn't declared, and quickly realise I've made a typo, which is why my date won't print out.

As well as making debugging easier, option explicit makes your pages more efficient and can increase their load time, so it really is worth getting into the habit of using it.

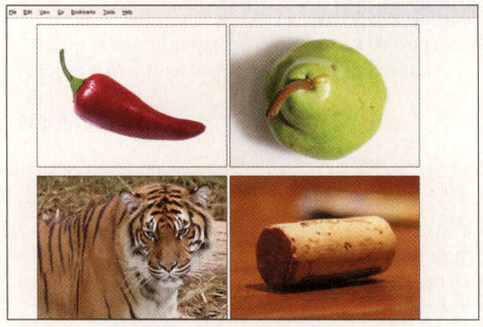
ADDING BORDERS

Q What's the best way to put borders around images on my page? I have hundreds of images that need to be displayed, and I don't really want to have to open them all in a graphics program to add a border.

Jane Adams

A You can use CSS to easily add a border to images. To add a border to every image you can do:

```
img {
        border: 2px solid #000000;
}
```



You can easily add borders to images by using CSS

However, it's likely you have other images in your layout that you don't want a black border around, so you can create a class that has the border, then apply the class to the image.

```
.borders {
        border: 2px solid #000000;
}
<ing src="photo.jpg" alt="This is a photo of me"
height+"250" width="400" class="borders" />
```

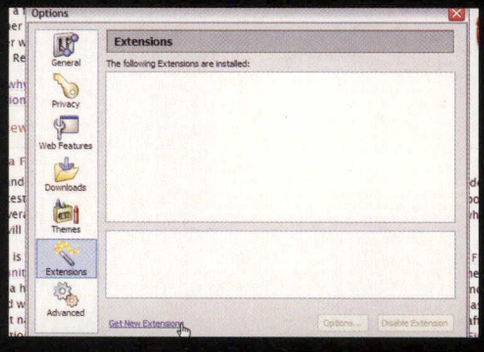
TECHNIQUE

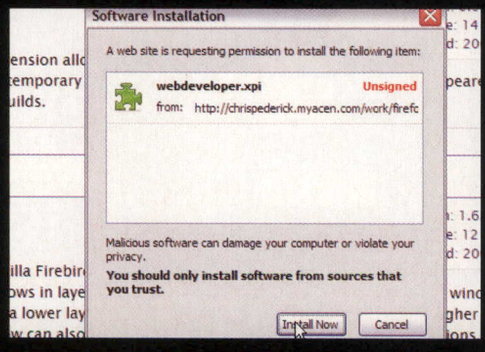
TESTING FOR ACCESSIBILITY

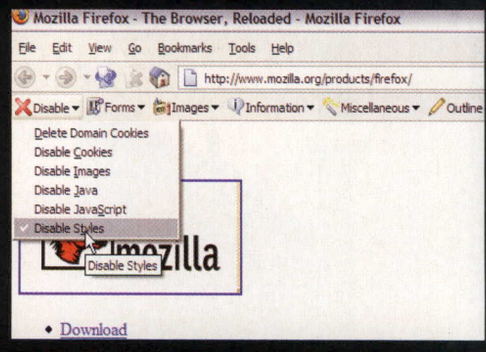
Q I'm trying to ensure that the sites I develop are accessible and work well for the greatest number of users possible, so I test with JavaScript and images turned off. However, turning off JavaScript and images through the Web browser menus every time I want to check a page is rather time-consuming – is there a quicker way to be able to test for these situations?

Jan Bentley

A I use the browser Firefox, which is part of the Mozilla Project and available for the Windows, Mac and Linux platforms, as my main browser. One of the cool things about Firefox is all the different extensions and toolbars that you can download for it. The toolbar that I have installed and active all the time allows me to easily toggle JavaScript and images on and off, check for missing Alt text, test a page for W3C validation and much more.




Software Installation
A web site is requesting permission to install the following item:
webdeveloper.xpi
Unsigned
from: http://chrispederick.myacen.com/work/firefc
Malicious software can damage your computer or violate your privacy.
You should only install software from sources that you trust.
Install Now
Cancel



1 DOWNLOAD FIREFOX

Download Firefox for your Operating System at **www.mozilla.com/products/firefox**. On Windows run the installer or follow the instructions for your platform, and Firefox will be ready to go. To install the Web developer toolbar, select Tools>Options, and in the Options dialog box select Extensions.

2 PLENTY OF LINKS

Click the Get New Extensions link at the bottom of the dialog box. You will be taken to a Web page. Scroll down the lists of extensions to 'Developer Tools' and click the link for Web Developer. Click the Install link, and you will be asked to confirm the install.

3 PLENTY OF CHOICES

The toolbar now displays under the Navigation toolbar. In the Disable menu you can disable JavaScript, cookies and styles. The Images menu lets you outline images without Alt text or hide images completely, and the Validation menu validates the document or CSS. The results appear in a new tab.

Shopping Cart Software

clickcartpro

ClickCartPro is a full featured shopping cart software with over 200 features.

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- Data import/export
- Site layout editing
- Discounts
- Keyword search
- 30+ payment options
- Affiliate programme
- Product downloads
- Easy product options
- File uploads
- Order tracking
- Flexible shipping
- Web based administrator
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ePDQ SecureHosting secure server hosting

WorldPay

protx

PayPal

FastPay brought to you by NatWest

ST SECURETRADING GLOBAL E-COMMERCE PAYMENT SOLUTIONS

NETBANX

e-clear On-Line Payment Solutions

PaySystems

NOCHEX EMAIL MONEY PREFERRED PAYMENT

Please check our website for a full list of payment processors and if we do not support your chosen processors we will normally integrate them for free.

Customer Comments

"We'd looked at shopping carts for months and were quite skeptical that CCP would work for us at a fraction of the price. Were we ever wrong! The installation was a breeze, the functionality is flawless and the service is outstanding."
Richard J. Lucibella, S.W.A.T. Magazine

"In the two weeks before buying CCP, I spent a total of $698 on shopping cart scripts which have turned out to be quite inferior to CCP, and extremely buggy. I'm glad someone out there actually knows what they are doing."
Roy Pope, Blue Aegis Software & Marketing

Customer Websites

As used by the THE TIMES

www.dreamynights.co.uk

www.clickcartpro.co.uk

info@clickcartpro.co.uk Tel. 01635 86 21 81

Greenbarn Consultants Ltd.

DANNY MCALEER

Currently working as a programmer and deisgner for a New Media company, Danny has been creating Web sites for six years. As a former Editor of Web Pages Made Easy, Danny has experience of using a variety of building packages and technologies. Before all of that, though, he was a power-coder with his trusty old Atari ST – a machine he still hankers after to this day.

SITE SOS WWW.CANUCKSABROAD.COM

CANUCKS ABROAD GETS A NEW STASH OF GRAPHICS AND SOME MUCH NEEDED RESTRUCTURING OF ITS PAGES FROM OUR SITE MAKEOVER EXPERT, **DANNY MCALEER**

Canucks Abroad (**www.canucksabroad.com**) provides links and sundry resources for Canadians living or working outside Canada. There are a number of sites around that provide a similar service, including Canadians Abroad (**www.canadiansabroad.com**) and the Canadians Abroad Resource Guide (**www.geocities.com/canadians_abroad**). However, there's still plenty of room left for our Canucks Abroad site to compete. It's certainly laden with good ideas: rolling news, guest books and maps, advice on moving and holidays, plus a shopping page that's currently under development.

The author has used Serif WebPlus to design some of the pages. While this software does provide a nice environment for doing loads of cool stuff, it does keep you closeted from the HTML. As a result, the code is a bit of a muddle, with CSS layers used all over the place to arrange the layout, where a standard table would suffice. Also, the export HTML has changed some of the text elements into graphics, which is a bit naughty.

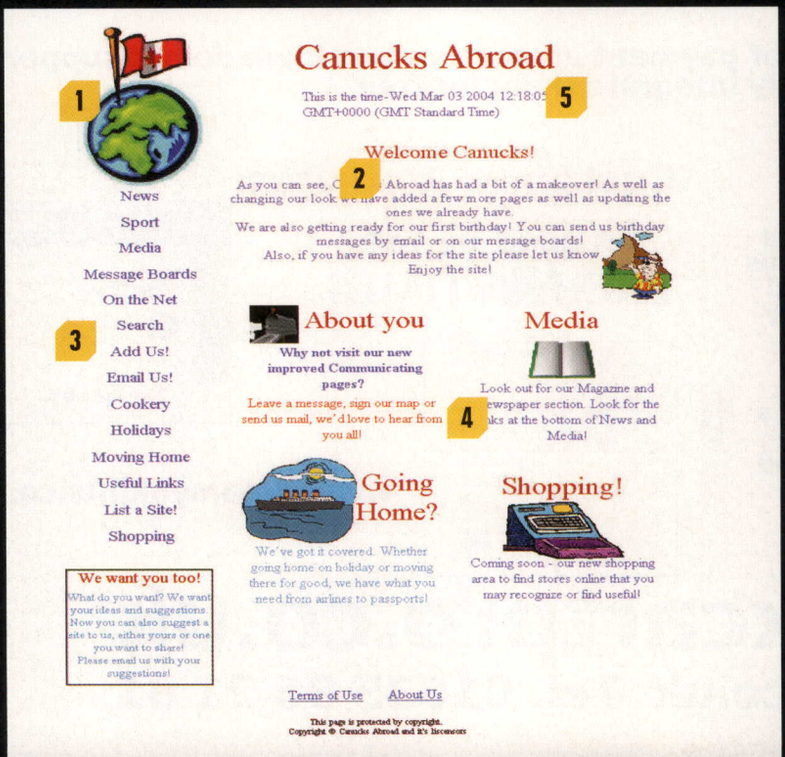
Essentially though, all the right components are on the main page. The links are nicely positioned to the left, with good juxtaposition of the main title, logo and introduction. Putting a synopsis of some of the other features visitors can find in the site is also a fantastic idea. This is something that can be changed every now and again when new sections are added or existing ones updated.

Unfortunately, this is where the layout gets even more muddled. Although the titles all use the same typeface, the body text has minor but hugely noticeable inconsistencies. Also, the positioning of the clipart appears to be a bit random, with some pictures to the side, while others are underneath. It doesn't help that all the images are different sizes.

The area that perhaps demands the most attention is the layout of each page and ensuring consistency throughout. This is easy enough to do once the first page is designed, as it can then be used as a template for all the others. It might be an idea for the author to use a different application (one that gives you access to the markup), or to make WebPlus export in HTML 3.2 mode, so tables are output instead of layers.

Other than that, paying a bit more attention to making body text consistent, plus better use of images will help enormously. The clipart is fine and actually adds some nice colour, so there's no need to eliminate it. Rather, the theme should be further exploited, which is what we've done in the rehashed version. ■

BEFORE: HELP NEEDED


1
Canucks Abroad
This is the time-Wed Mar 03 2004 12:18:05 GMT+0000 (GMT Standard Time)
5
Welcome Canucks!
2
As you can see, C Abroad has had a bit of a makeover! As well as changing our look we have added a few more pages as well as updating the ones we already have.
We are also getting ready for our first birthday! You can send us birthday messages by email or on our message boards!
Also, if you have any ideas for the site please let us know.
Enjoy the site!
News
Sport
Media
Message Boards
On the Net
3
Search
Add Us!
Email Us!
Cookery
Holidays
Moving Home
Useful Links
List a Site!
Shopping
About you
Why not visit our new improved Communicating pages?
Leave a message, sign our map or send us mail, we'd love to hear from you all!
4
Media
Look out for our Magazine and ewspaper section. Look for the nks at the bottom of News and Media!
Going Home?
We've got it covered. Whether going home on holiday or moving there for good, we have what you need from airlines to passports!
Shopping!
Coming soon - our new shopping area to find stores online that you may recognize or find useful!
We want you too!
What do you want? We want your ideas and suggestions. Now you can also suggest a site to us, either yours or one you want to share! Please email us with your suggestions!
Terms of Use
About Us
This page is protected by copyright.
Copyright © Canucks Abroad and it's licensors

1 SITE LOGO

The main logo for the site is bright and cheerful, and nicely focuses the user's attention on the navigation links below. However, the quality could be greatly improved if it was saved in GIF rather than JPEG format, and if it was properly resized using an image application rather than in HTML.

2 INTRO TEXT

WebPlus will merge text into a graphic if the boxes overlap, which is what's happened here. Text in graphic form should only really be used for ornamental typefaces, logos and headlines. As it is, the text is difficult to read (owing to the JPEG compression), and makes the page take longer to load.

3 NAVIGATION LINKS

Quite unusually, this site has opted for what appears to be text-based links on the main navigation bar. In actual fact, these are also images, which seems a bit redundant. There's also no visual indication (no underlines or rollovers) that these are links.

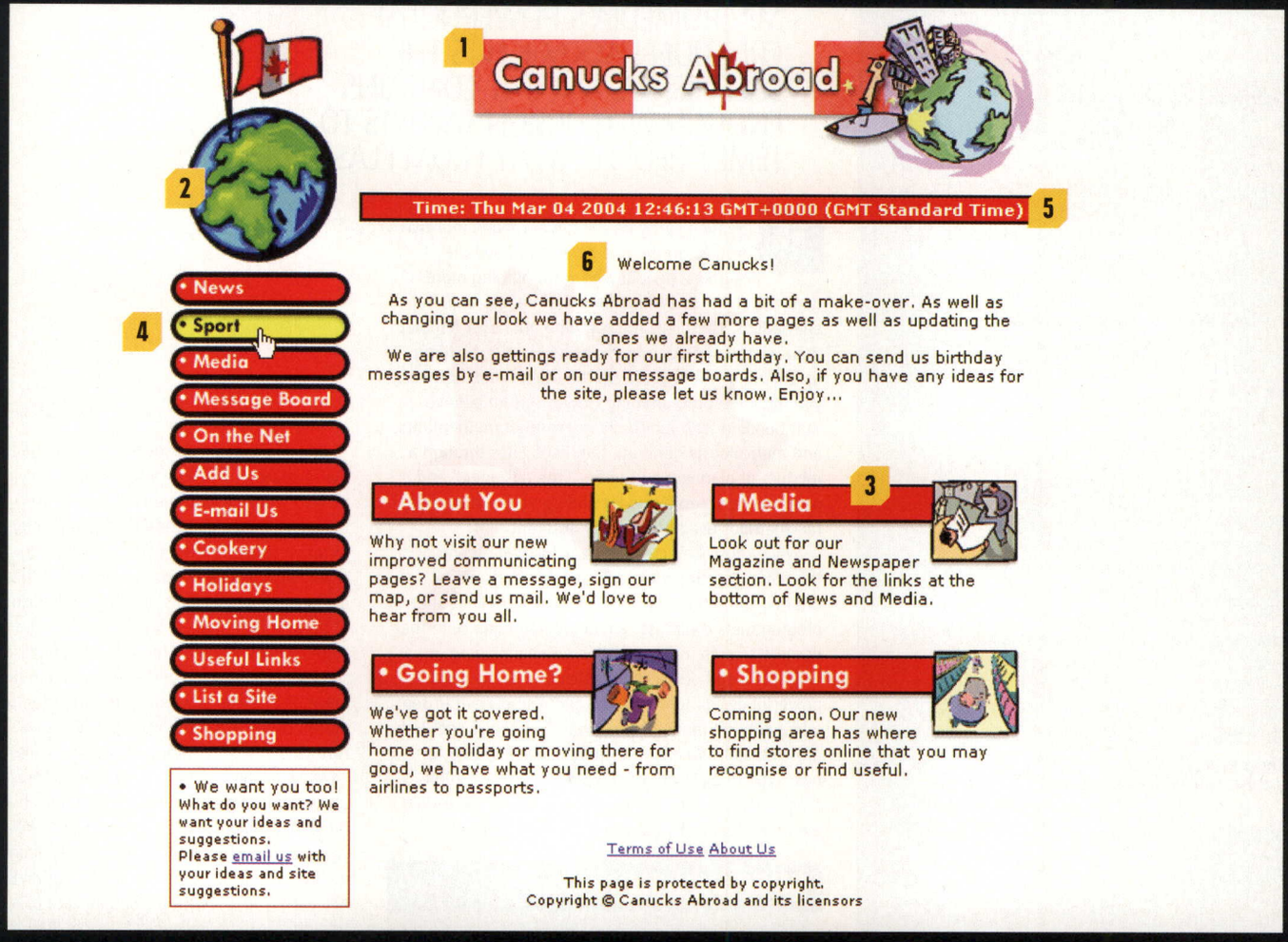
4 MAIN PAGE LAYOUT

The concept of introducing four of the other sections on the home page is a terrific idea. However, the typefaces and positioning of the images aren't the same for each section, which spoils the effect a bit.

5 TIME STAMP

JavaScript clocks and date stamps are something of a novelty item to put on a Web page. What would be better here is if the date was more integral to the layout and design of the page, rather than just being bolted on for its own sake.

AFTER: THE FINISHED RESULT


1
Canucks Abroad
2
Time: Thu Mar 04 2004 12:46:13 GMT+0000 (GMT Standard Time)
5
6
Welcome Canucks!
As you can see, Canucks Abroad has had a bit of a make-over. As well as changing our look we have added a few more pages as well as updating the ones we already have.
We are also gettings ready for our first birthday. You can send us birthday messages by e-mail or on our message boards. Also, if you have any ideas for the site, please let us know. Enjoy...
4
• News
• Sport
• Media
• Message Board
• On the Net
• Add Us
• E-mail Us
• Cookery
• Holidays
• Moving Home
• Useful Links
• List a Site
• Shopping
• We want you too! What do you want? We want your ideas and suggestions. Please email us with your ideas and site suggestions.
• About You
Why not visit our new improved communicating pages? Leave a message, sign our map, or send us mail. We'd love to hear from you all.
3
• Media
Look out for our Magazine and Newspaper section. Look for the links at the bottom of News and Media.
• Going Home?
We've got it covered. Whether you're going home on holiday or moving there for good, we have what you need - from airlines to passports.
• Shopping
Coming soon. Our new shopping area has where to find stores online that you may recognise or find useful.
Terms of Use About Us
This page is protected by copyright.
Copyright © Canucks Abroad and its licensors

1 A BRIGHT GRAPHIC BANNER

Rather than using standard text, the page can be enlivened with a graphic banner across the top. The one in this example is a simple combination of the Canadian flag (used as a background for the site title), and a clipart globe. It's a nice way to bring together the red and white theme, and the clipart graphics that are used throughout the page.

2 PLANET LOGO

Although there is now a banner at the top, the original logo is still really useful for focusing attention towards the navigation buttons. The only difference is that the graphic has been cleaned up (removing the aliasing caused by JPEG compression), properly resized and then saved as a GIF image rather than a JPEG, so that the background can be set to transparent.

3 THE SECTION PANELS

To make the highlighted Themes section of the main page more structured and consistent, the text and images have been wedged into a standard HTML table with invisible borders. The banners are image-based, and sliced into two sections so that the part of the clipart that extends below the red rectangle can be set into the cell background. This enables text to be written over the top.

4 NAVIGATION BUTTONS

Image-based buttons look much better than dull old text links, especially when they're just listed down the left-hand side of a page. Notice how the buttons use the same typeface and style as the banners, and complement the original logo as well. Creating a rollover button is easy enough to do. These do little more than change colour, but they still provide essential visual feedback for visitors.

5 DATES AND BOXOUT STYLES

The JavaScript date stamp code has been moved into its own table cell, which has a style applied to it to give it the same white type on a red background as the other banners. This helps to integrate the date more into the page. It also serves as a way of splitting up the title graphic and the main body of text.

6 STANDARDISING TEXT

Setting a standard text size, colour and style is imperative. Using a style sheet, all the text is set to a Web-friendly typeface that can be easily read onscreen (this CSS file can also be linked to all the other pages in the site). To break up the plain white background, a faded maple leaf has been added. Using CSS, this single image can be centrally placed and not repeated across the page.

ON TEST

OUR RATING SYSTEM

Every product we review on the following pages is rigorously tested by an experienced industry journalist. This means that our reviews are unbiased and impartial. Many magazines throw ratings at you with no explanation of what they mean, but our tests are different. Every rating you see is presented alongside a brief description of why we've chosen to award this score. This way, we hope we can give you a fuller picture of the program or hardware in question. Here's how our verdict system works:

Features

Does the product have enough functionality to make it worthwhile? Has the manufacturer thrown in features to blind you with science? We explain here.

Ease of use

Here, you'll discover if a product can be picked up and used straight out of the box easily. It's not all about being beginner-friendly, though, and we're looking for intuitiveness and an easy path to impressive results.

Quality of results

A product may be easy to operate, but does it provide you with the results you want to achieve? This category often tells you most about a product, as results are what ultimately determines its success or not.

Value for money

Does the product's feature range merit its price tag? Are you paying over the odds for a one-trick pony, or will the product prove a valuable addition to your toolkit?

Final score

Every product we review is given a final percentage as a summary of its overall performance. Look for scores about 85% for a top class piece of software or hardware.

Products which receive 90% or more are given the coveted *Web Designer* award. Only the most outstanding products are awarded a score in the nineties, and this rating marks that product as 'must-have'.

ON TEST THIS MONTH

Director MX 2004 122
Discover what treats await in the latest version of Macromedia's immensely powerful design package

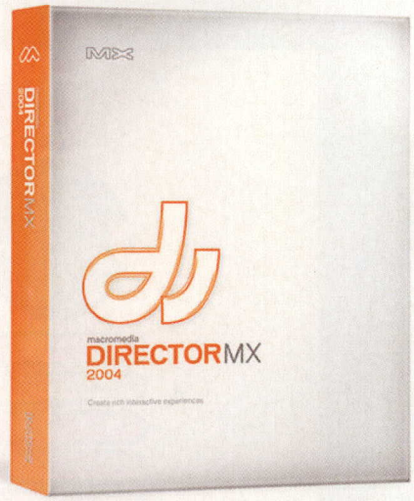
Mustek Be@rPaw 4800TA Pro II.....125
As well as a cute button system, this latest Mustek also places a wealth of tinkering sotware at your disposal

Ulead Photo Explorer 8 126
Organise and tweak your digital images like never before with this cool new tool from the makers of PhotoImpact

Book reviews 128
As the sun starts to come out for another year, we show you what you should be reading as you soak up the rays

DIRECTOR MX 2004

AS THE LATEST VERSION OF MACROMEDIA'S POWERHOUSE CREATION PACKAGE HITS THE SHELVES, WE ASK IF IT CONTAINS ENOUGH WEB DESIGN TALENTS TO TEMPT PEOPLE AWAY FROM FLASH



Creation software has always fallen into two groups. On the one hand, you have the designers, people who want nothing more than the ability to fashion beautiful images and animations. These are the sort who are never happier than when knee-deep in Photoshop layers, building up stunning works of art. On the other hand, however, you have the programming crowd. This lot believe that building Web interfaces is a form of mathematics, and meticulously generate their Web sites through a mixture of planning and coding. The designers' and programmers' results might end up very similar, but the methods used are entirely different.

While most Web creation tools focused on one or the other, Director set trends early on in its life by offering something different – a design package that programmers could use, and a programming suite that designers could use – and all in one handy program as well! It's long been recognised as one of the most powerful design tools around, and it's not hard to see why, with the range of Shockwave games on the Web growing daily. Six months after its siblings, Director has come of age with a promotion to the MX 2004 range, and this latest range claims to offer more than ever for advanced Web designers of all types.

SPECIFICATIONS

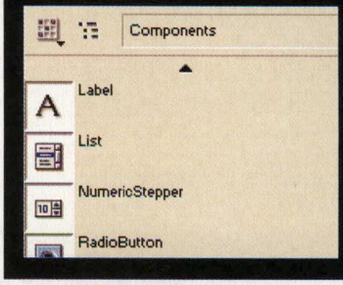
Product:	Director MX 2004
URL:	www.macromedia.com
System requirements:	PC
	PIII 600MHz processor or above, Windows 2000 or XP, 128Mb of RAM, 200Mb of disc space
	MAC
	PowerMac G3 500MHz or above, OS X 10.2.6 or above, 128Mb of RAM, 200Mb of disc space

One of the big changes to the revamped Director is the increased ease with which you can include Flash movies within your projects. Previous users will know from experience that, despite the similarity of the two formats, Shockwave and Flash were always kept separate. Macromedia has realised that this wasn't doing them any favours, and has now included a range of options that make it an absolute doddle to import Flash movies into your Director operations. While you'll still need Flash to make the animation in the first place, this option adds another dimension to your design canon – and effectively enables you to control Flash movies from within a Shockwave file.

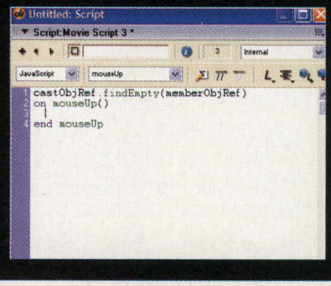
As you can no doubt tell by now, increased cooperation with Flash lies at the heart of the new Director. Anyone who's used the Studio MX 2004 suite won't be surprised to hear the phrase 'round-trip editing' at this stage. The new Director allows you to edit Flash movies with the simple click of a button in the interface, an obvious yet very helpful tool for any high-end multimedia designer.

This tool clearly helps position Director as much more of an all-round design tool, making it far more Web design focused than ever before. This is compounded by the inclusion of a Components panel in the new Director. If you're thinking that you've seen this somewhere before, don't fret – this is indeed the same Components panel that has been cropping up in Flash for some time now. Ally this to

IN DETAIL: A GLIMPSE AT THE NEW FEATURES IN DIRECTOR MX 2004



Existing users of Director will love the inclusion of Flash-style components in the interface. Drag the pre-built items to the page, and you can have a wealth of page furniture without any of the grunt work you'd associate with it.



This is the first version of Director to feature JavaScript coding, and power users will welcome the addition of the popular language to bolster the existing Lingo syntax.

"IF 80 PERCENT OF THE PROGRAM WASN'T RELATED TO WEB DESIGN, THE REMAINING 20 PERCENT WOULD STILL MAKE DIRECTOR THE BIGGEST WEB DESIGN TOOL ON THE PLANET"

the huge amount of power at your disposal in Director, and you're looking at something that's both easy to use and powerful enough to knock your socks off. Considering this was one of the biggest criticisms aimed at the program by Web designers before, more Web features can only be a good thing. And let's face it, even if 80 percent of the program wasn't related at all to Web design, Director is so massive that the remaining 20 percent would likely make it the biggest Web design tool on the planet.

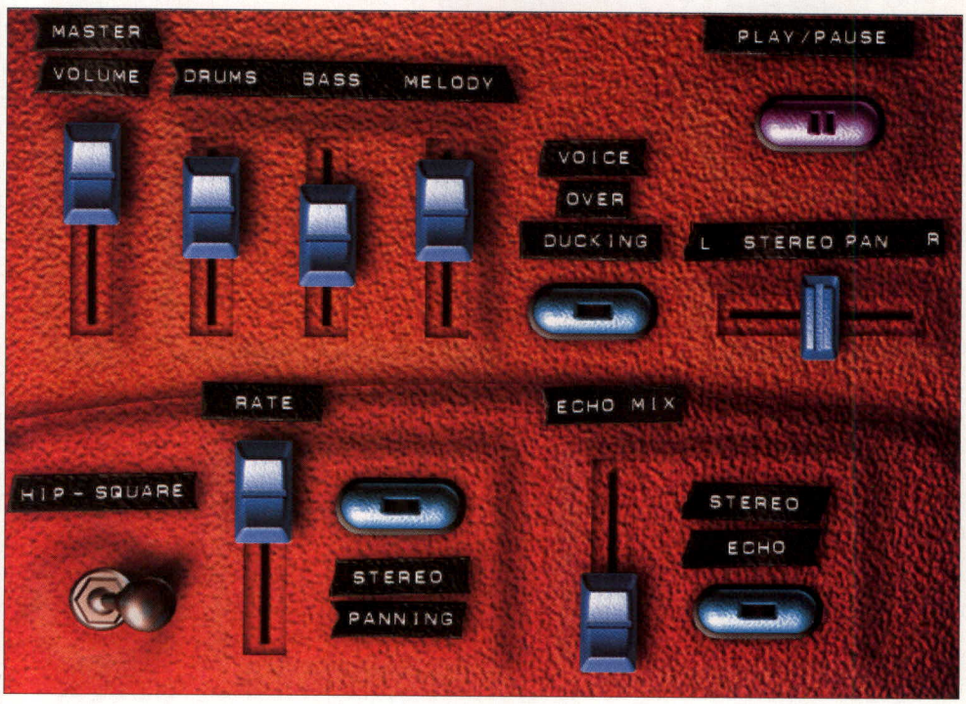
The inclusion of JavaScript support for the first time is something else that will make Web designers sit up and take notice. Existing Director users will appreciate that the package contains its own scripting language in the shape of Lingo (rather like Flash's ActionScript), and every piece of coding has always been done in this syntax. The addition of JavaScript allows power users to gain even more control over their projects, and also provides an easier point of entry for people used to coding their own buttons and menus in Notepad.

Macromedia is rightly trumpeting its new sprites-naming procedure, tweaked especially for the all-new version of Director. This bonus will sit particularly well with designers used to the Flash way of working. Director old hands will know the old method: you could give a sprite any name you liked, but it would always sit in a channel (like Flash's layers) that was ordered and named numerically. This meant that every piece of Lingo you created would need to refer to the sprite in channel 1, rather than the much more convenient sprite name you've chosen. MX 2004 makes this minor hassle a thing of the past, and you can now rename each channel according to the sprite it contains. When you come to code your masterpiece, you simply link to the simple name of the sprite. It doesn't sound much, but it will shave hours off your time when you're working on a monster project.

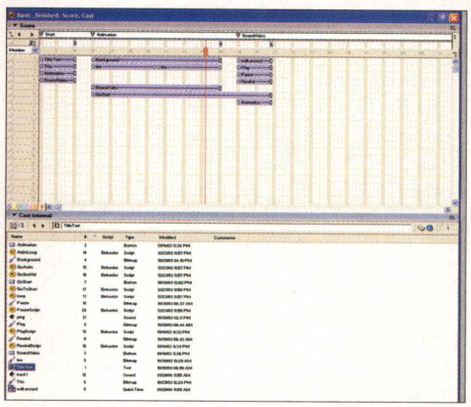
Another nice feature of Director MX 2004 is the Real video feature. Sure, it's been around since version MX, but the importance of this one feature cannot be underestimated. Essentially, Director allows you to place a Real movie clip in your animation, then treat it like any other member of the cast. This means you can control the movie with your own player controls, but also enables you to incorporate it as just part of a larger animation.

Macromedia has also made the whole publishing arena that little bit easier. A range of new options allow you to export to a variety of platforms and formats with the click of a mouse button. For anyone who's ever spent far too long trying to export a Shockwave file to Mac and then PC, this is a godsend.

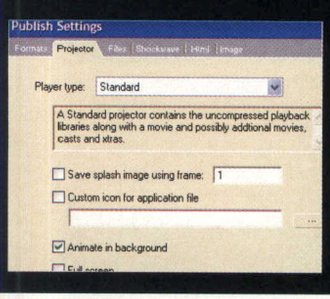
Director's amazing 3D capabilities have also been around for several generations, but this feature just keeps getting better and better. You can use the tool



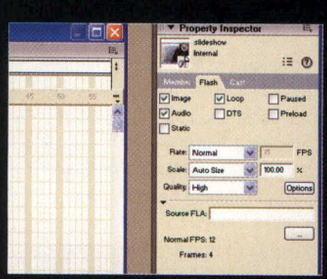
Using a variety of sound and animation tools, you can quickly create user-controllable players that not only work like a dream, but also look highly professional as well



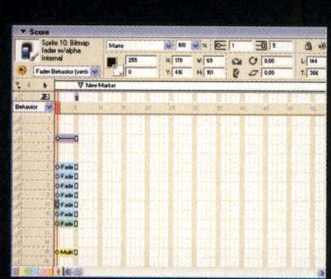
If you're used to Flash, the Score/Cast method of working is easy, but will take a bit of getting used to


Publish Settings
Formats | Projector | Flash | Shockwave | Html | Image
Player type: Standard
A Standard projector contains the uncompressed playback libraries along with a movie and possibly additional movies, casts and xtras.
Save splash image using frame: 1
Custom icon for application file
Animate in background

A new MX product from Macromedia wouldn't be the same without a revamped interface. The new Director boasts a number of tweaks, all designed to make your life that little bit easier.



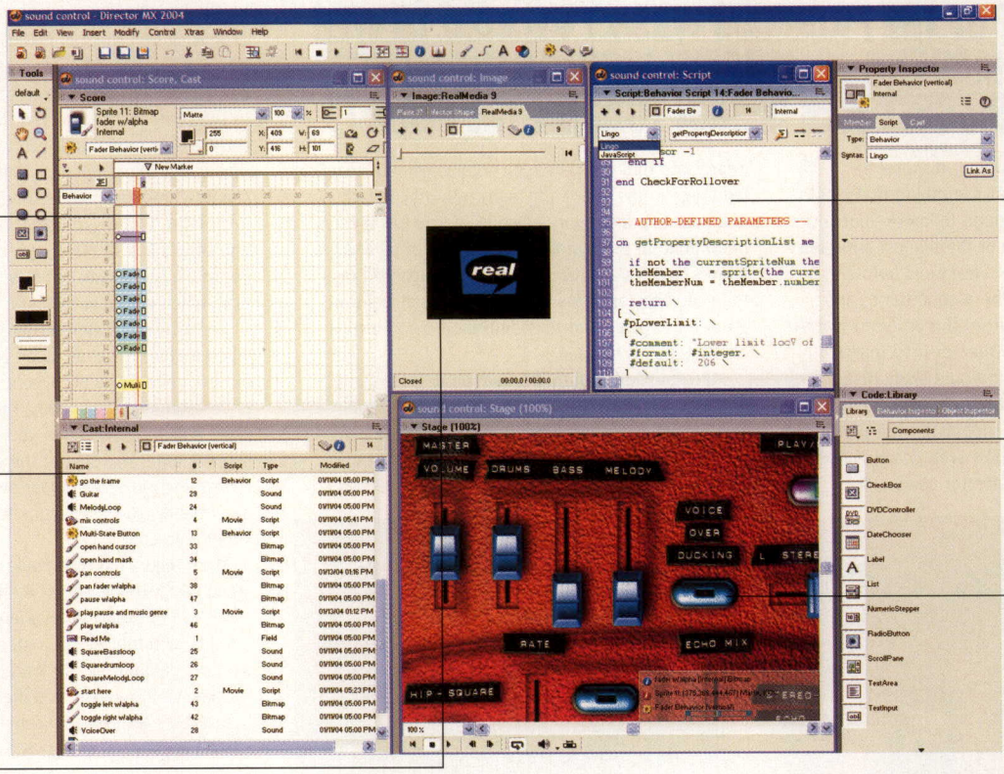
Central to the new Director MX 2004 is its integration with Flash. You can import Flash animations into your work and perform a wide range of functions on them without leaving the Director interface.



Director MX 2004 contains some good news about sprites. Designers can now name their channels according to the sprites within them, making it much easier to link everything in Lingo or JavaScript.

Director MX 2004 revealed

Discover what you need to know to get the most out of Macromedia's power package



What's the score?
Director's score performs pretty much the same function as Flash's timeline, and is where you build your animation

Casting couch
The cast presents you with an intuitive display of all the elements used in your animation

Video star
Include a variety of video formats in your projects with this simple window

Breaking the code
A floating window contains all your code, including any JavaScript present

Piece-by-piece
A new components panel allows you to incorporate ready-built objects into your project

All the world's a stage
The stage is where you fashion the finer points of your project

in conjunction with dedicated 3D clients such as Cinema 4D to gain amazing results, but the joy of Director's 3D tools is that it contains its own engine to power along your graphics, and the range of effects you can add to your animations has to be seen to be believed.

To call picking out the Web features of Director the tip of the iceberg would be an understatement of massive proportions. Quite simply, you're unlikely to find any program around that offers the same immense wealth of functionality as that which appears in Director. What's more, version MX 2004 sports a number of healthy tweaks designed to make the client even more powerful.

One of the big draws for the powerhouse designer is MX 2004's ability to work with DVD format video. This developer-friendly feature enables advanced users to fashion high quality video presentations using the popular format. Add this to the wealth of formats that Director is more than happy to let you play around with, and you're looking at a superb video solution for all levels of users. With Windows Media, Real Media and QuickTime already on board, the addition of DVD and Flash video shouldn't be sniffed at. Director is increasingly being used as a learning tool, and this function should make it easier than ever for companies to create presentations and distance learning tools without breaking the bank.

As you'd expect, the interface has been tweaked, and we'd argue that Director is now the most attractive of the MX 2004 range. When you consider how many windows you can (and often need to) have open onscreen at any one time, this is an unexpected bonus. The inclusion of a MIAW feature will certainly help Shockwave video producers. Confused? MIAW refers to the dockable Movie In A Window tool that allows you to dock your movies alongside all your other panels, making not only for a cleaner workspace but placing your movie content where it should be – at the heart of your production.

Version MX 2004 is undoubtedly the most Web-focused of all the Directors to date, although there are still loads of features designed specifically for large-scale 3D work and building CD interfaces. In a way, though, we could envisage many would-be buyers choosing between Director or another one of Macromedia's jewels – Flash MX 2004 Professional. While they're very different, many of the features introduced into Flash Professional brought it far closer to Director's functionality.

In the end then, you have to wonder whether a would-be buyer is likely to be dissuaded from shelling out on Flash in favour of Director. While the latter is undeniably more powerful, not least for the Web, price has to be taken into account as well. If you're talking about all-round features, then Director is well worth the £959 you'll have to pay for it. Web designers choosing between the new Director and Flash MX 2004 however, will feel that the higher price takes the former out of their range, and makes Flash much more likely to be top of their list. ■

VERDICT

Product: Director MX 2004
Price [inc VAT]: £959
Telephone: 0131 458 6766
URL: www.macromedia.com

Features
■ As ever, the range of features in Director MX 2004 puts virtually everything else around to shame

Ease of use
■ Director's never been the easiest program to use, but MX 2004 has a range of components that help

Quality of results
■ Once you've mastered the tools (give it a while), you'll achieve amazing, highly professional results

Value for money
■ OK, it's nearly £1,000, but how many other programs have you seen that contain nearly as many features?

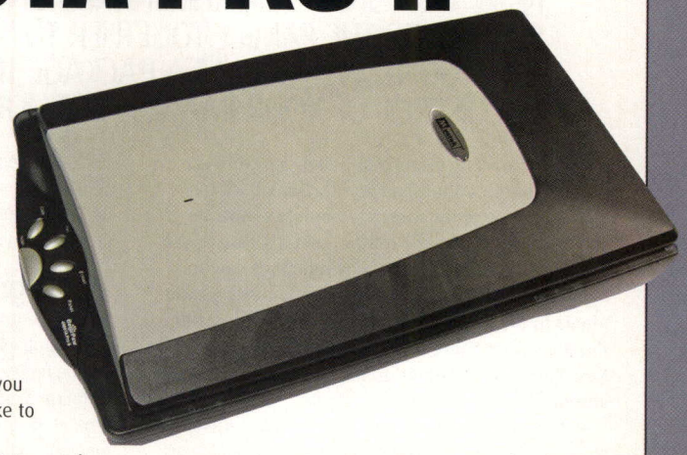
SUMMARY

■ Director has always had more features than just about any other tool on the market, but this latest version answers many of the Web-related issues that blighted previous versions. The price tag is hefty, but it's still well worth a grand of anybody's money.

FINAL SCORE: 90%

BE@RPAW 4800TA PRO II

WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE LATEST ADDITION TO MUSTEK'S INCREASINGLY WELL-KNOWN BE@RPAW RANGE OF SCANNERS, AND FIND THAT BEGINNER-FRIENDLY DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN BASIC



In a crowded marketplace, every good product needs something to make it stand out from its rivals. Call it a unique selling point if you're feeling like a marketing executive, but it's this one thing that makes people stop and take notice when comparing like products.

A few years ago, somebody at Mustek came up with the Be@rPaw idea, and since then we've seen a range of scanners hit the shelves at regular intervals. Each new scanning device comes with the patented control method – five control buttons at the head of the scanner that are, unsurprisingly, shaped like a bear's paw. Attractive, but very functional as well – in case you were wondering, the five buttons deal with scanning, copying, faxing, emailing and bringing up the control panel onscreen.

The 4800TA Pro II sits at the top of the current heap of Mustek scanners on the market, and boasts a cool 2400x4800 maximum resolution. While this falls short of some high-end scanners, it should be more than enough for any Web designer to grab images effectively. Photophiles will also be chuffed to find a built-in 6x4 transparency adapter to let you convert your trannies into crisp digital images.

As you can imagine, scanning is a doddle with the Be@rPaw buttons – simply press on the Scan button on the scanner, and you'll be presented with a scan in seconds. Unfortunately, the interface method used with the Mustek means that you have to open up a different program to start making minor tweaks to your image, something that could cause the odd gripe over extended use.

The range of software supplied with the Mustek is comprehensive, to say the least – so much so in fact, that it took our beleaguered CD drive some 20 minutes to install the drivers and all the software. The main control panel is attractive, and allows you to configure your scanner relatively quickly and easily. A key to the true aims of the 4800TA Pro II can be spotted here, though – while scan tweaking options are conspicuous by their absence, you'll find a Personal Styles button instead. This smiley face icon enables you to configure various parts of the interface to look the way you want – a beginner feature that we'd like to have seen buried somewhere else.

The Be@rPaw's beginner-friendly status can be seen throughout much of the supplied software. While there are a few good tools, many of the options seem to be designed for people scanning for the first time – something that will prove annoying to experienced users out for a quick scan. Having said that, the inclusion of a Smart Image Merge function to let you join up to four pictures must be commended, as should the rather fetching ePhoto-snap, designed to make it easier to scan a multitude of photos quickly and easily.

"EVEN IF YOU HAVE A DECENT PHOTO EDITOR ON YOUR MACHINE ALREADY, WE'D ANTICIPATE THAT YOU COULD GET SOME GOOD USE OUT OF THIS TOPNOTCH PROGRAM"

The jewel in the software crown here is definitely Ulead's Photo Express 4, a tool which offers you a wealth of photo-organising and manipulating options. Even if you have a decent photo editor on your machine already, we'd anticipate that you could get some good use out of this topnotch program. It will certainly prove more helpful to designers than some of the other programs supplied with it. In short, the scanner is actually very good, but it's let down by a collection of strange and sometimes unhelpful software. ■

■ The inclusion of tools like Ulead's Photo Express 4 should help you get the most out of your scans

■ The main panel interface looks good, and offers you a collection of the most common tasks you're likely to use

SPECIFICATIONS

Product:	Be@rPaw 4800TA Pro II
Scan modes:	Up to 48-bit
Optical resolution:	2400 x 4800 dpi
System requirements:	PC
	200MHz Pentium PC or above, Windows 98SE, Me, 2000, XP, 128Mb RAM, 220Mb hard drive space

VERDICT

Product: Be@rPaw 4800TA Pro II
Price [inc VAT]: £81.99
Telephone: 0870 0132017
URL: www.mustek.de

Features
■ A good scanner, which performs its tasks very well – comes with software that might not help you

Ease of use
■ Once everything's installed, you're always only one click (on the front) away from scanning heaven

Quality of results
■ For such a low-priced scanner, you really have to be impressed with the scans the 4800TA churns out

Value for money
■ Boasting a comprehensive range of software and an excellent scanning engine, the 4800TA is a bargain

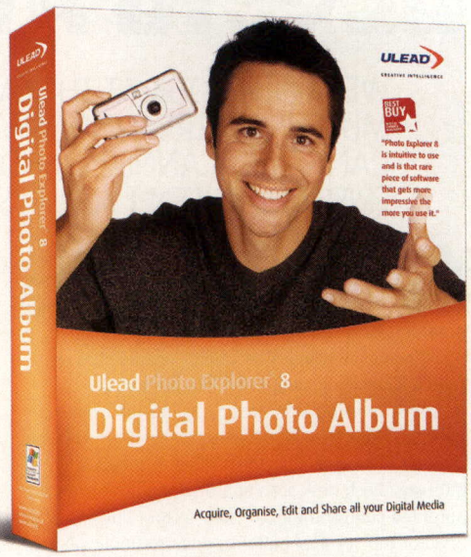
SUMMARY

■ If you're on the lookout for a cheap scanner that will give you crisp digital images, then the Be@rPaw 4800TA Pro II is right up your street. The range of supplied software won't be right for everybody, but it's still well worth a gander.

FINAL SCORE: 79%

ULEAD PHOTO EXPLORER 8

NOW THAT SNAPS CAN BE SHARED ONLINE, THE DAYS OF GATHERING THE FAMILY TOGETHER TO VIEW PHOTOGRAPHS HAVE GONE. WE LOOK AT A PACKAGE THAT WANTS TO PUT YOU IN CONTROL OF YOUR IMAGES AND HOW YOU PUBLISH THEM


ULEAD
Ulead Photo Explorer 8
Digital Photo Album
Ulead Photo Explorer 8
Digital Photo Album
Acquire, Organise, Edit and Share all your Digital Media

According to popular belief, a picture is worth a thousand words. Think back to some of the most memorable events in world history or popular culture, and it's easy to see how captivating the still or moving image can be. Moments like the collapse of the Berlin wall, Beatle mania in the Sixties, Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon, and more recently the horrific scenes of New York's Trade Center attack have all been immortalised by the camera's lens.

People also want to be able to encapsulate important events in their lives, and photos of college graduations, holidays and family weddings are treasured for years.

Digital cameras and the current affordability of domestic processing technology mean that a host of exciting possibilities are now available to any photography freak. Taking snaps has become a more accessible and disposable concept overall, with PC connectivity allowing the storage of a potentially massive collection on CD or DVD. It's also really easy to duplicate your images and send them across the Web via email or by posting them on your home page. But perhaps the biggest problem is looking after all these precious files and presenting them in the right way.

Ulead Photo Explorer 8 is the latest product in a long line of similar titles that explicitly set out to help here, and replace the dusty leather-bound equivalents of old. On the face of it, you may be forgiven for thinking that the software is little more than a fancy file manager, but the range of great options goes beyond the obvious comparison. The ability to quickly acquire native shots from a number of devices and then make rapid adjustments will delight home enthusiasts, although we'll be shifting much of our attention to the promising online facilities.

SPECIFICATIONS

Product:	Ulead Photo Explorer 8
URL:	www.ulead.co.uk
Format:	PC and Mac
System requirements:	PC Windows 98, 2000, Me and XP Intel Pentium III compatible, 32Mb RAM 18Mb disk space, 800x600+ display
System requirements	Mac Mac OS 8.6 or later, Quicktime 4 or later 32Mb RAM 32Mb disk space

Photographic memory

Prising the installation CD from the cheesily-fronted box is probably the toughest task you'll face when setting up Photo Explorer 8. There's not much technical literature provided or needed, and in no time at all the onscreen guides will get the program running. You get all the usual prompts about registration and file associations along the way, and an intriguing Regional Selection dialog that asks about PAL or NTSC video support – a hint to the subsequent media capabilities ahead.

When the program opens you're presented with a fairly standard and functional interface. It'll have cleverly leapt to your desktop's My Pictures folder, if you have one, so several thumbnails will probably already adorn the main workspace. Apart from that, it's business as usual with a distinctly familiar folder-management vibe incorporating the obligatory panels for directory trees and the neat ability for bookmarking favourite paths. The idea is that you can scan your many disk drives manually or automatically for images and then group them together or assemble into folders or slideshows.

While you go about this, you'll uncover a highly useful method for previewing and performing basic edits that won't interfere with what's happening within the main window. A compact panel lets you open an image, zoom in or out, and locate any part that needs a closer inspection before launching a dialog of more advanced options. You can rotate or invert everything within a click before administering crops, colour and contrast fixes, or even use a great Balance tool to heighten certain colours.

However, anyone wishing to give their snaps a more distinctive edge will be most pleased with the range of integrated effects such as ripple, mosaic and watercolour. There's even a Lens Distortion facility which comes in really handy if you either want to correct a problem or simulate some odd effects, while a Red-eye Removal tool is ever-present.

Once you've got your photos together, the next stop would probably have to be the considerable slideshow options. From the extremely well illustrated main toolbar, you can quickly open a panel at the bottom of the screen that holds the sequence of files you want to string together. Images are simply dragged into this area as needed from the main preview window and then swapped into order. Most of this is fairly traditional and self-explanatory stuff, with completed shows easily saved or exported. Sequences can be fully configured to specific durations and then set as screensavers in an instant, or burnt to CD and DVD for PC and TV playback.

Web sharing

Another option you have for outputting your slideshows is all about sharing images or media in general on the Web. The Output Web Slideshow facility is actually quite a powerful tool and will be the perfect solution for anyone wanting to implement a thumbnail gallery or product carousel without hassle. What makes this so good is that the whole thing can be tailored to how you want the template pages to look, including background colours and accompanying text. The images are then embedded into actual HTML documents, which makes any tweaking you may want to do in Dreamweaver

IN DETAIL: WHAT CAN PHOTO EXPLORER 8 DO?

Something Photo Explorer does very well is preview images you load into it. It does use sizeable thumbnails to list and display the potentially large amount of files or photos you work with, but you can double-click each one to blow it up.

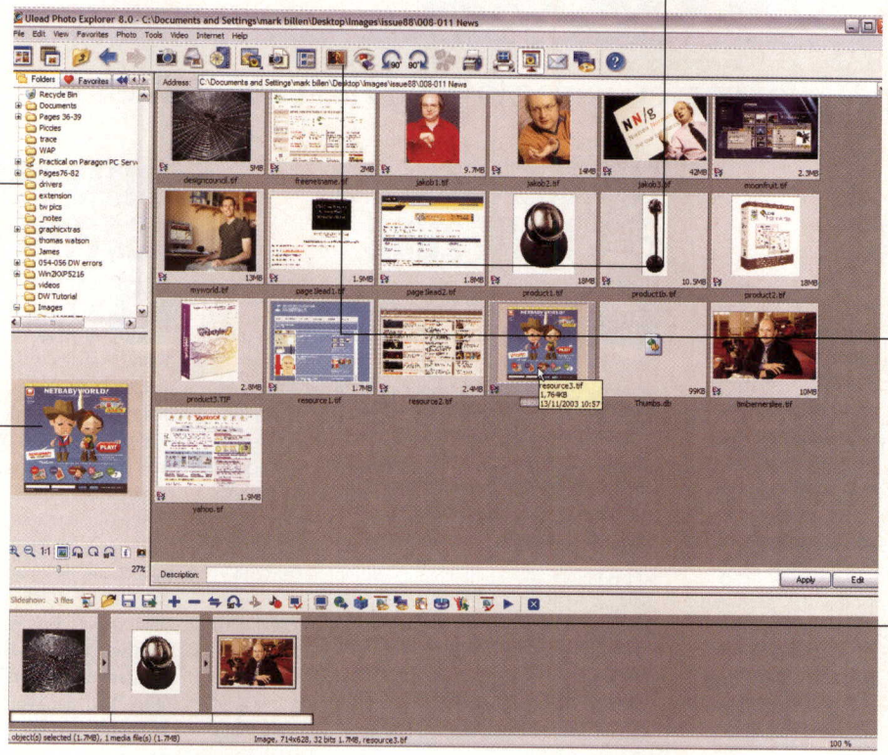
The Adjust Image dialog is a great toolbox of distortions and filters that will give photos or graphics a unique twist. Manipulations such as colour, contrast and tone balance are joined by other effects like emboss, charcoal and ripple.

A mainly drag-and-drop-based interface means slideshows are really easily put together. Once you've located your files, just assemble them into an ordered sequence before selecting any of the tool options.

Photo Explorer 8 up close

Get acquainted with the Photo Explorer interface

Image browser
The main area of the program contains the many thumbnails found within a chosen directory. Here you can use all the copy and delete commands you'd expect from a file manager



Folder view
This box is used purely to browse manually through folders and directories when looking for your photos and images. Paths can be added as bookmarks and are also listed in this tabbed panel

Preview panel
Selecting an image in the main window opens it within this panel. You can take a closer look with the zoom functions before performing rotations or more advanced effects

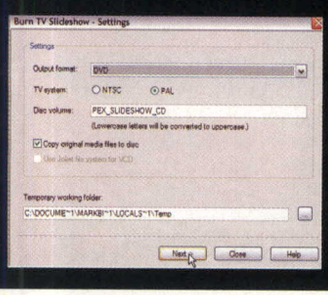
Command bar
Clearly illustrated buttons adorn the main action bar, including commands for device capture, starting slideshows and initiating print operations

Slideshow reel
A thin panel is added to the bottom of the screen when you decide to start a new slideshow, and images are just dragged into sequence before being exported

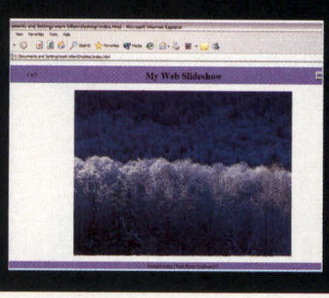
"THE INTELLIGENT AND WELL PUT TOGETHER ASPECTS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FIND FAVOUR WITH PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO WANT TO MAKE TENTATIVE FORAYS INTO ONLINE WORK"

dead easy. You'll be surprised how thorough everything is, and details like page resolution, Unix filenames and automatic uploading to a specified Web server are excellent. The package also promotes the iMira site for online image swapping (this requires signup), and also a very worthwhile Search tool for hunting Web graphics.

These intelligent and well put together aspects will undoubtedly find favour with photographers who want to make tentative forays into online work, but probably won't be enough to persuade the more experienced. And it doesn't help that these features aren't pushed further to the front of the program, perhaps forming more of a focal point than the main file management elements. Also, possibly one of the biggest problems a package like this faces is overcoming doubts prospective buyers might have about such a niche product. There's no denying that Photo Explorer 8 and others like it are extremely well built and designed applications, and very effective at what they do, but they still seem slightly 'thin'. Superficially, the interface is too formulaic and so akin to the way Windows XP has taken its integrated file manager, it just seems slightly disappointing. This, coupled with the fact that other larger graphics suites or Dreamweaver extensions already do much of what you'll find here, leave you feeling that perhaps the additional 'media sharing' tools don't go far enough. ■



■ Creating a photo CD you can view for prosperity on your TV's DVD player is another big selling point. This is really easy, and the Creation tool prompts you for options like TV format and drive data before you hit Record.



■ The options for publishing slideshows as Web galleries are a real boost, and will generate document templates in no time. Everything can be tweaked, and the resulting HTML pages can be edited and enhanced elsewhere.

VERDICT

Product: Ulead Photo Explorer 8
Price [inc VAT]: £24.99 (online)
Telephone: 01327 844880
URL: www.ulead.co.uk

Features
■ The Web-publishing facilities are very commendable but too much is made of things you'd expect

Ease of use
■ A tried-and-tested format for the interface coupled with nice icons makes this easy to get to grips with

Quality of results
■ The image-editing tools are highly effective and the slideshow publishing results particularly impressive

Value for money
■ It'll be up to you to decide if the slideshow and Web gallery tools are enough to warrant the price

SUMMARY

■ A very well executed and functionally sound app that's as impressive as it is frustrating. The package is intuitive yet predictable in the way it covers old ground. The additional Web publishing options are extremely well put together, but could be explored and pushed further.

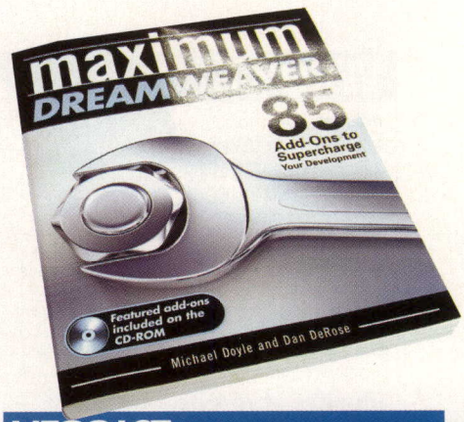
FINAL SCORE: 78%

BOOK REVIEWS

This time around, our books cover all the bases any author could need, including powering up Dreamweaver, understanding Flash and mastering usability

MAXIMUM DREAMWEAVER

Fans of our cover discs might testify that some of the most useful development stuff can be found under our Resources section. It's here that you'll find all sorts of great kit from templates to fonts, and even the type of extensions that'll power up Dreamweaver. This is the subject of this book, which includes 85 essential add-ons to install and learn about. Each comes courtesy of a leading developer and will help already competent DW users to the next level. The text largely consists of multi-step instructions on how best to use the resources, all grouped into relevant chapters such as 'Managing Frames' and 'Embedding Controls'. Overall presentation may be pretty bland due to lack of colour, but the black and white screenshots are enough to illustrate the proceedings. Instructions are easy to follow, and the way in which the authors have stripped everything down should make it easy to pick up for anyone. The result is a title that provides a unique angle on Web development, ideal for anyone hoping to squeeze more from Macromedia's finest. ■



VERDICT

Author: Michael Doyle & Dan DeRose
Price: £19.99
ISBN: 0-7645-4448-9
Publisher: Wiley
URL: www.wiley.com

SUMMARY

■ The coupling of some genuinely terrific extensions on the companion CD and a detailed guide on how they work make for an effective read that could only be bettered by some colour.

FINAL SCORE: 83%

FOUNDATION FLASH MX 2004

Virtually all the magnificent sites on the Web that motivate and inspire you owe their brilliance to Flash MX – rapidly becoming the weapon of choice for many heavyweight designers. Foundation Flash MX 2004 is ideal for people who have no knowledge of the package but want to harness its powers quickly. All the essential aspects are covered over a total of 18 chapters, and start with fundamental topics like the interface, the timeline and using symbols. Practical exercises are used to navigate through more advanced tasks such as motion tweening or writing scripts before adding multimedia content. An easy-to-follow step-by-step format is largely adopted, but nice touches are the uninterrupted briefings introducing each section and the summary checkpoints rounding them off. The lack of colour is again a pity, especially in the chapters on producing graphics, but this needn't distract from a title that's well written and very easy to get into. Anyone who follows the case studies and digests the text should see their home pages reap the benefits. ■

VERDICT

Author: Kristian Besley & Sham Bhangal
Price: £21.50
ISBN: 1-59059-303-0
Publisher: Friends of Ed
URL: www.friendsofed.com

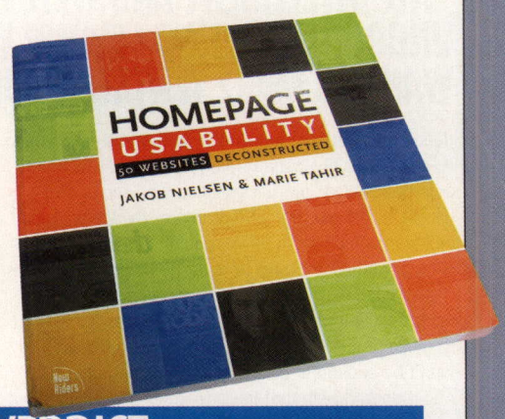
SUMMARY

■ Getting started with Flash needn't be a nightmare. This book finds virtually a perfect blend of practical case studies, in-depth theory and all-round thoughtfulness for the reader it's aimed at.

FINAL SCORE: 87%

HOME PAGE USABILITY

Godfather of Web design Jakob Nielsen teams up with fellow Nielsen Norman Groupie Marie Tahir for this plush new title. Online usability is the name of the game here, but a unique twist sees 50 commercial domains thrust under the microscope. A useful intro chapter with guidelines for good content writing, navigation and links is followed by a series of annotated breakdowns for sites like the BBC and Disney. Full-page shots of the home pages are scrutinised, with points raised on how each could be improved. No punches are pulled, and the honest interpretation of the use of 'screen real estate' is very refreshing. The only slight downside is that often the book doesn't practise what it preaches. The pages are large, but are sometimes overloaded with text. This could be off-putting, and would surely be frowned upon by Dr. Nielsen if it were online. But it doesn't make it unreadable, and the interspersing of attractive black double-page spreads keeps the format fresh. ■



VERDICT

Author: Jakob Nielsen & Marie Tahir
Price: £30.99
ISBN: 0-7357-1102-X
Publisher: New Riders
URL: www.newriders.com

SUMMARY

■ A bright, bold presentation serves up real-world examples very well, with great colour images and diagrams. Nielsen's advice is, as ever, extremely useful, making this highly recommended.

FINAL SCORE: 91%

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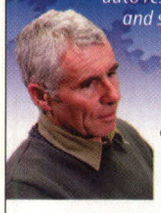

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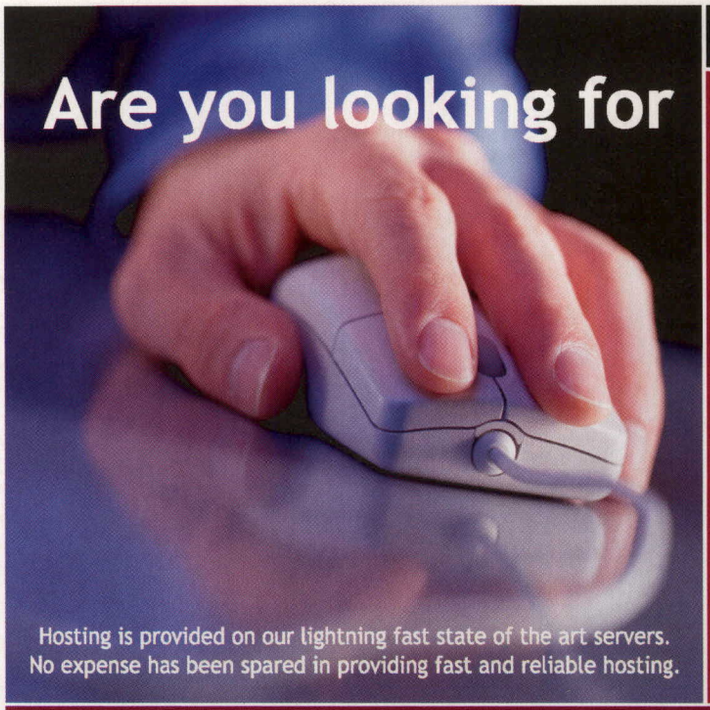

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Pages 58-61
Click here to download the files you need to follow the tutorials in this section
After you click the button a folder will open. This window may appear behind this interface. Please copy the files to the desired location on your computer (i.e. your desktop) and run from there.
COPY FILES TO DESKTOP

Section navigation
Click on the links to move through each section

Content links
Here you'll find links to the files on the CD

How it works

Our aim with every issue's cover disc is to create the perfect complement to the issue itself. This means that navigating the CD should be as easy as reading the magazine, with each section designed to mimic a key area. While many CDs throw huge lists of software at you and expect you to find the programs you're interested in yourself, our CD is different. If you want a Dreamweaver extension, therefore, you'll find it in the Dreamweaver section – which also contains the software itself, as well as a host of other Dreamweaver-related utilities. Each section also contains tutorial files to help you better follow the walkthroughs on each of the key programs. Again, you'll find these essential files stored under each main program heading.

The reason for choosing this method of navigation is a simple one – we want to make your disc as intuitive and straightforward as possible. We hope you find the contents of the disc useful for developing your knowledge – that is the point after all!

The *Web Designer* CD is both PC and Mac friendly. We appreciate how many of you Flash users, for example, create your animations on an Apple machine, so we've tried to assemble a list of software as impressive as the PC section of the disc. What's more, for the first time ever, Mac users can navigate the disc through the same interface as the one on the PC side, making things much more intuitive.

WINDOWS MACX

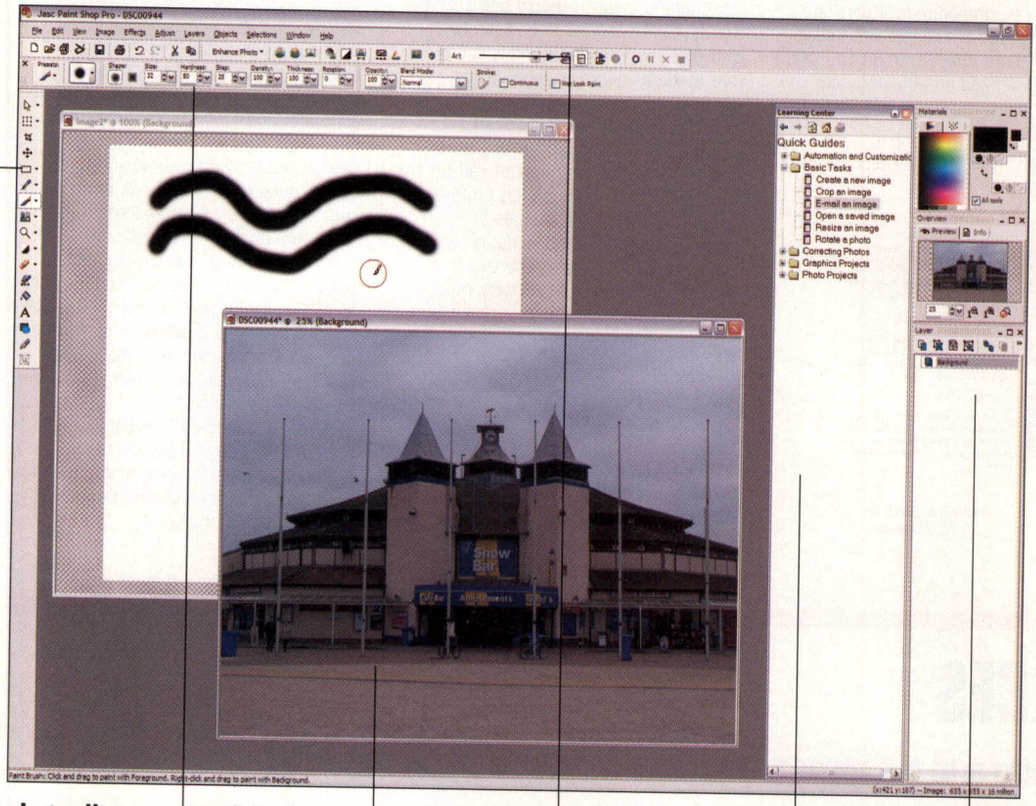
ON THE DISC

Look for the logo

This logo appears on many of the tutorials to tell you that the files you need to follow the walkthrough appear on your disc. You'll also find a handy guide to finding the files.

PAINT SHOP PRO 8

Jasc's graphics package is a firm favourite with professionals and consumers alike. Master the interface with our easy guide



Tools toolbar
All the editing tools for cropping and selecting are joined by a host of brushes for cloning colour and applying effects. Preset shapes are also included, with further actions to be found on drop-down menus.

Tool Options palette
Once a tool is selected, this thin bar will appear with varying options inside it. Brush sizes and opacity can be set along with line widths when drawing shapes.

Image Canvas
All imaging work takes place within a re-scalable canvas. New ones can be created with any dimension you require, while resizing, rotating and zooming is all possible.

Standard toolbar
The standard toolbar holds common operations for opening or saving images and initiating clipboard commands. An 'Enhance Photo' bar is also included, with effects and enhancements available.

Floating palettes
A number of dockable boxes including the Materials, Overview and Layers palettes enable you to select colours and preview the changes you make. Layers can also be added, arranged or promoted here.

Learning Centre palette
This panel contains a hierarchical menu of guides that instruct you on performing basic actions. These 'Quick Guides' are presented like Web pages.

Keyboard shortcuts

Show Command History	Control & Shift & Z	Show all Toolbars	Control & Shift & T
Copy Selection	Control & C	Fit Window to Image	Control & W
Paste into Document	Control & L	Add Gamma Correction	Shift & G
Set Colour to Transparent	Control & Shift & V	Display Help	Shift & F1
Swap Colour Swatches	Control & Alt & F6	Zoom In or Out	Z

FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO IN PAINT SHOP PRO 8

1: PRODUCT TOUR
An all-new Product Tour feature and 'Quick Guide' provision enables novice users to familiarise themselves with the application in no time. A set of common projects also give step-by-step practical instructions on how to get great results fast.

2: TABLET SUPPORT
Support for pen and tablet users has been dramatically enhanced to put more control at your fingertips. Varying colours, density, size and thickness of selected brushes can now be triggered by pen pressure, tilt or altitude.

3: SCRIPTING
Scripting has been introduced to take the bother out of performing repeated actions and improve general workflow. Preset macros or those recorded yourself will execute a string of commands to multiple files in the blink of an eye.

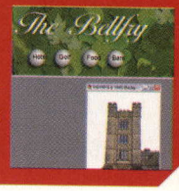
4: CUSTOMISABLE INTERFACE
The whole interface or workspace can be completely customised to suit the way you work. By dragging and dropping the onscreen components, you can create a new profile that can be shared across multiple computers.

5: SPECIAL EFFECTS
A fresh selection of filters and special effects can be used to transform your graphics or photographs. Tonal ranges can be set to create stunning black and white results, while adding soft focus or halftone styles is also possible.

IN THIS ISSUE

On pages 76-79 this month you can follow our excellent guide for creating an attractive and stylish home page within Paint Shop Pro 8.

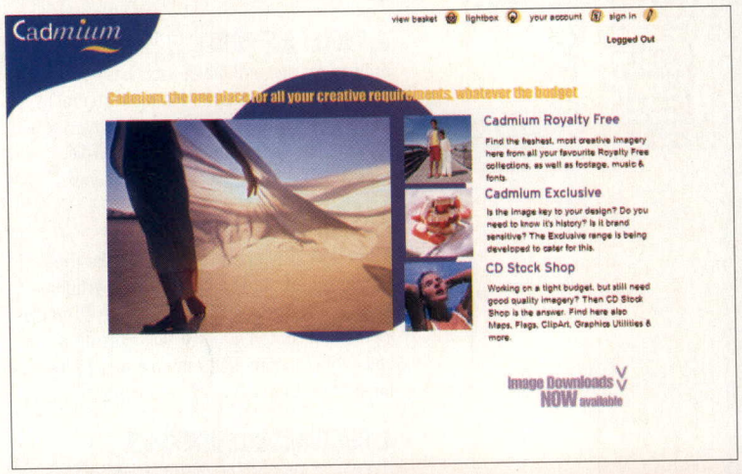
Get the inside track on the PSP8 techniques that the power users know and use with our tutorial found on pages 80 through to 84.



CADMIUM ROYALTY-FREE RESOURCES

GET YOUR HANDS ON SOME OF THE WEB'S FINEST WEB-BUILDING RESOURCES, COURTESY OF THE TEAM AT CADMIUM

Starting with this issue, we've teamed up with the people at Cadmium Systems to provide a range of exclusive resources. First off we have a couple of three-minute MP3 audio files that would make the perfect accompaniment to anyone's site, mixing ambient styles with funkier rhythms. All are totally free for you to use and distribute, and are joined by an incredibly classy TrueType font named 'Bartholeme', which should add a similar touch of class to your site's text. For those of you who don't know, Cadmium has made its name on high quality materials since forming in 1993.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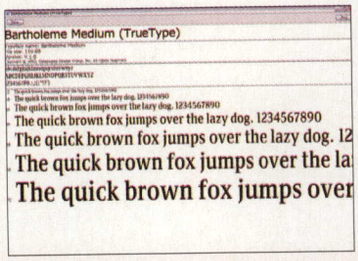
Working on a tight budget, but still need good quality imagery? Then CD Stock Shop is the answer. Find here also Maps, Flags, ClipArt, Graphics Utilities & more.
Image Downloads NOW available

Established by Bridget Lovatt, **www.cadmium.co.uk** has always been known as a one-stop port of call for the creative industry, supplying professional grade typefaces and images at competitive prices. "Effectively, we brought royalty-free to the UK, so as you can imagine we feel very much part of its history, and as a result are known to many as 'the royalty-free picture people'," Lovatt explains.


Bartholeme Medium (TrueType)
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 1234567890
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 12
The quick brown fox jumps over the la
The quick brown fox jumps over

Driven by an apparent customer-centred approach, the team pride themselves on giving artists and designers an 'under-one-roof' solution from their huge stock of materials from various sources. New collections are constantly being added to the range from providers such as Artbeats and Digital Vision, or even through their own Cadmium Collection. "We also have a range of Footage, Music and Sound up on the site, as well as the Design Tools section which enables people to purchase their favourite design software and hardware through Cadmium – once again fulfilling the 'total solution' expectation."

If you're impressed by what you've seen this issue, watch this space for further Cadmium resources. In the mean time we recommend visiting Cadmium's site for more information.

THEORY7 RESOURCES

BUILD AMAZINGLY PROFESSIONAL WEB SITES IN NEXT TO NO TIME, THANKS TO THIS BUMPER COLLECTION OF STUNNING RESOURCES

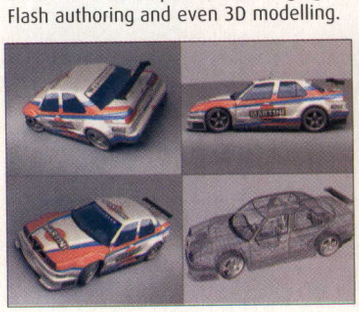
We didn't want multimedia and dynamic Web developers to feel left out this month, so we've provided some excellent resources for them as well. Theory7 is one of the most comprehensive and attractively put together resources we've seen on the Net, and the team have generously submitted an array of materials that are both useful and exciting. Valued at an estimated £110, the collection you'll find on the disc encompasses still imaging, Flash authoring and even 3D modelling.

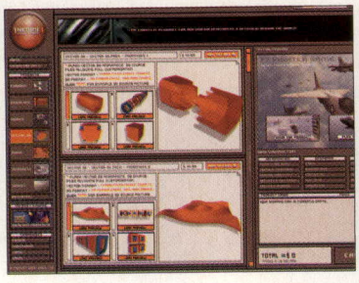
A rotating, fully textured model of an Alfa Romeo V6 Ti exemplifies the results achievable in 3D Studio Max, which can then be embedded into your own HTML projects or exported into Flash.

Next up is a fully functional interface that can be easily tailored to accept your own content, logos or images. Called the 'Disk Selector' because of its clever drag and drop navigation tools, the SWF document can be opened and edited to your requirements in no time at all. The code has all been thoroughly commented, so you can also tinker with Behaviors, while all the fonts and images featured throughout have been thoughtfully packaged alongside.

We've also included a folder of additional photographs. Taking in some breathtaking shots of horizons and landscapes, these JPEGs can be freely incorporated into any private or commercial projects you wish to use them for, although Theory7 has supplied a list of publishing stipulations within a supplied Word document.

Multimedia bases are well and truly covered by some brilliant piano-flavoured WAV loops that would be more than ideal for greeting passing visitors or banging onto your latest Flash creation. All this and more can of course be found at Theory7's sublime site at **www.theory7.com**, so you'd be foolish not to check it out too. Featuring a really slick and polished look, it also has some superb games, 3D vector animations and full-blown dynamic applications for sale.





Full CD listing

With two full programs, some excellent trials and more tutorial files than you can shake a stick at, here's your full CD rundown

PC

SOFTWARE
Dreamweaver MX 2004 (Trial)
Flash MX 2004 (Trial)
Hutmil 5.8
Paint Shop Pro 8 (Trial)
Serlient (Trial)
Toolbar Software Silver

RESOURCES
Andromedra plug-ins
Cadmium resources
Extensis plug-ins
Free-Flash-Templates
Photoshop-stuff.com
SSI Developer tutorials
Ten-pound-templates
Theory7 templates

TUTORIAL FILES
Pages 38-42
Pages 44-46
Pages 48-52
Pages 54-56
Pages 58-61
Pages 62-66
Pages 68-74
Pages 76-79
Pages 80-84
Pages 88-89
Pages 90-91
Pages 92-93
Pages 94-95
Pages 104-109

MAC

SOFTWARE
Dreamweaver MX 2004 (Trial)
Flash MX 2004 (Trial)

RESOURCES
Andromedra plug-ins
Cadmium resources
Extensis plug-ins
Free-Flash-Templates
Photoshop-stuff.com
SSI Developer tutorials
Ten-pound-templates
Theory7 templates

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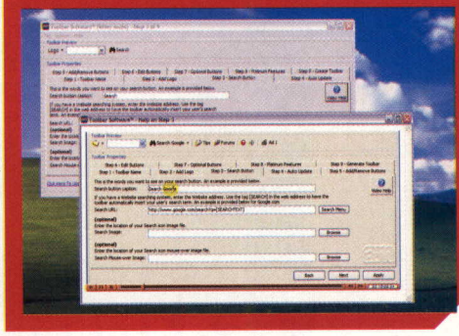
TOOLBAR SOFTWARE SILVER
www.toolbarsoftware.com

Giving visitors the information they want has to be a top priority for any online designer. However, a major problem or pitfall can actually be letting them know when valuable new content or services are available, especially when they might get distracted by a rival. One solution to this is to deliver all your attractions straight to the user's desktop and even let them visit without touching a browser. You can do exactly that with this full version of Toolbar Software, without all the technical know-how you might think you'd need. A simple step-by-step interface talks you through creating a fully functioning executable component with minimal hassle.



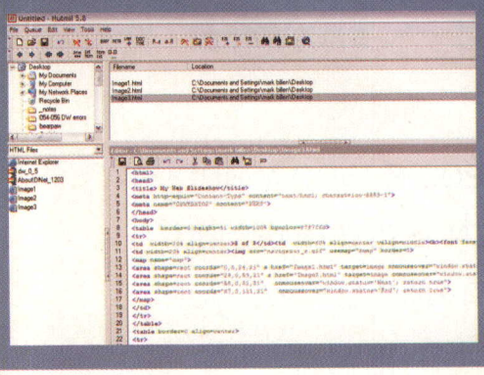
HUTMIL 5.8
www.triplehash.com

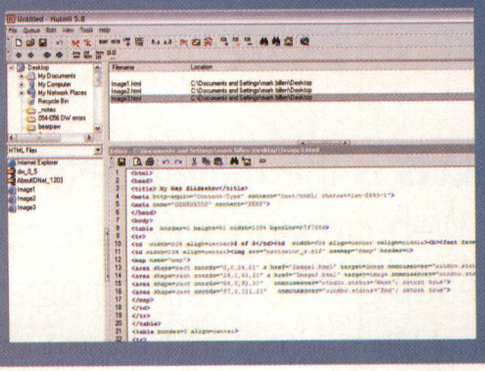
If you speak to a good many Web designers in the commercial field, they'll probably tell you that maintaining or updating a site is a task they loathe doing. Although very grateful for the custom and trust placed in them by the customer, they usually just want to be concerned with the more creative stuff.

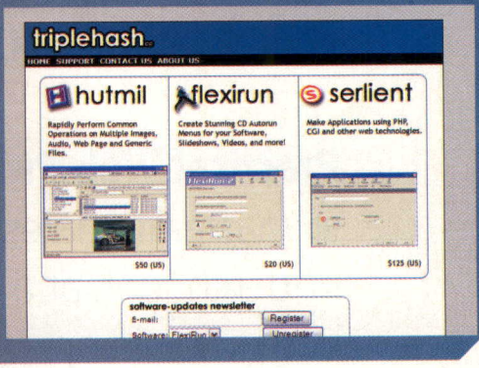
Hutmil 5.8 however, is a piece of software that does its best to alleviate the practical chore of editing or refreshing many markup documents in one go, taking the time and effort out of this kind of work. HTML, XHTML or XML pages can all be loaded into the program and stacked into queues for processing with a multitude of handy tools. You can edit the code directly via the integrated text editor or opt to manipulate the listings automatically with Dreamweaver-esque 'Find and Replace' tools. This starts at the basic level of substituting words or phrases within areas of text, right up to a special Tag Replace dialog that has the potential to be more powerful.

Administrators who wish to implement changes across those tags that have since been rendered as deprecated could find this feature a real godsend. Similarly, you can quickly unify the general appearance of a set of pages by applying a single <BODY> tag across each file – perfect for those sites aimed at older browsers. A Conditional Replace tool will then let you change all of one type of element to something totally different, while a particularly clever 'Add Directive Code' facility lets you define regularly updated sections.

As if all these features weren't enough, the program's tidy and concise interface yields all sorts of other batch operations, like ASCII to HTML conversion and extension renaming. To cap it all off, a Meta tag reference and general tag toolbox will ensure that any changes you make are 100 per cent correct. ■







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- Work faster and smarter with our speed-saving tips
- Turn your Web site into a winner with our indispensable techniques

PLUS

- Create incredible animations and sites with the all-new Director MX 2004
- Make your site fully accessible in Dreamweaver: experts show you how
- Discover how to avert Web site meltdown in our guide to backing up

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>Close

Image: Ghost Valley
Creator: Allstarr
URL: www.allstarr.de
This piece was fashioned by German digital artist Allstarr as one of many splash screens to adorn the brilliant **www.allstarr.de** Web site intro page. Utilising the self-described style of 'overdose trendwhore', Allstarr fashions these impressive images using a combination of Cinema 4d, Studio Max 6, Bryce and Photoshop. Inspiration for these cool pieces stems from an 'abstract life' and a love of progressive trance.

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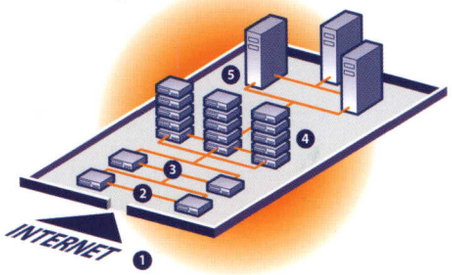

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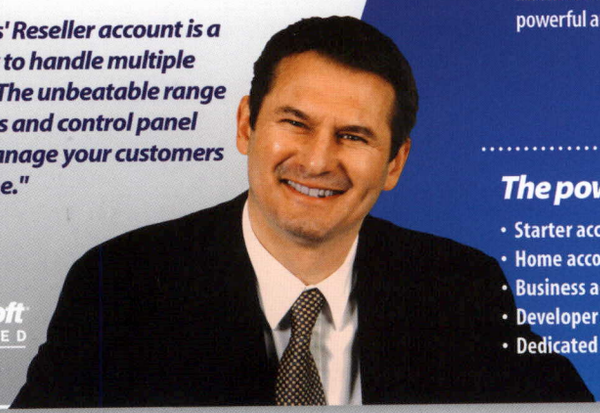

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